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1767-1862.

A history of my time







MEMOIRS OF CHANCELLOR PASQUIER

VOLUME I







ETIENNE-DENIS DUC PASQUIER

*Chancellor of France*

*Member of the French Academy*

*Born April 21 1767 Died July 5 1862*



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A HISTORY OF MY TIME

MEMOIRS

OF

CHANCELLOR *Etienne-Denis* PASQUIER

(1767-

EDITED BY

THE DUC D'AUDIFFRET-PASQUIER

TRANSLATED BY CHARLES E. ROCHE

THE REVOLUTION—THE CONSULATE—THE EMPIRE

VOLUME I 1789-1810

WITH PORTRAITS

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## PREFACE

AFTER a perusal of all that I have written during the last eight years, the first question I asked myself was what title I should give to the voluminous product of my labor. I next sought to form an idea of the judgment likely to be passed upon it, should it see the light of publication.

At all events, that day will not come, if my wishes are respected, until some time after my death.

The title of *Memoirs* is well worn; moreover, I do not fill a sufficiently important place in this lengthy narrative, and the events which I relate therein are of too great a magnitude for me to give myself undue prominence. On the other hand, the title of *History* is somewhat imposing, and, is my book on a level with so pretentious a title, when I have remained silent about many matters, and, at times, passed rapidly over important events?

If, on the one hand, I have sought to curtail the recital of the well-known incidents of the Revolution, I have entered into fuller detail with regard to the Restoration. It has been my task to sketch the history of Europe's general policy during a period when the facts were of the highest importance, such as the revolutions in Spain, at Naples, and in Piedmont. Greece, so rich in memories of a glorious past, has laid the foundations of an apparently secure

independence. Therein lie the germs of events which may perchance make the nineteenth century memorable.

After pondering awhile over the best manner of characterizing the contents of these pages, I have concluded that the most appropriate title would be: *A History of my Time*.

A thing of more importance than the choice of a title for the work, is for me to know how far I have succeeded in filling in the frame of my picture, and, especially, what will be the impression left on the mind of the reader concerning the author himself. I beg my readers will kindly believe that what has given me the least anxiety has been to lay claim to and bring into relief whatever slight literary merit it may possess. I am, without any reservation, prepared to submit to any judgment, however severe.

It would avail me but little to plead that the small amount of natural talent with which I may have been endowed was not developed by serious studies in my early days, and that subsequently the state of idleness and discouragement into which I was thrown by the first ten years of the Revolution completely diverted my attention from such serious study as would have remedied this disadvantage.

The whirlpool of events into which I found myself dragged absorbed my attention in too high a degree to render it possible for me to regain lost time, and create unto myself what might be deservedly called a style; but, such an admission would not find acceptance; critical readers might remark that the whole of the book has not been the production of one single effort, and that a strict chronologi-



cal order has not been observed. There will be others who will object that the space given to the several parts of the book is somewhat out of proportion to their actual importance.

I must crave indulgence on all these points. That which gives me the greatest concern is the opinion likely to be conceived as to the manner in which I have judged men and things, especially as to the connection and harmony I have given my impressions, and the spirit of sequence which has presided over the judgments passed by me according to the various circumstances of which I am the narrator.

I began writing in 1822, so it cannot be a matter for doubt that my opinions about matters political had at that date undergone considerable change since 1787, the time of my entering the Parlement. My ideas, my sentiments had travelled in an opposite direction from that in which the mind commonly progresses. Youth's bent is almost ever towards ideas of independence and liberty, and not unfrequently are these ideas absorbed with passionate fervor.

A riper age proves to youth that there are certain social conditions which call for the expansion of authority, and when old age makes its appearance, that authority generally finds youth enrolled under its banner.

Like everybody else, I followed at the outset of my career the inspirations of my youth; but the scenes of which I was a spectator during the months of July and October, 1789, quickly brought me back to my first allegiance, a royalty which, if not absolute, should at least be the preponderating element.

The horrors of 1793 and 1794, the disgusting spectacle presented by the government of the Directoire, could have no other effect than to keep me in that frame of mind; and, as a natural consequence, the unlimited power of the chief of the state both under the Consular and Imperial Governments, appeared to me at first sight merely in the light of a guarantee of security without which social order could not exist.

Then it was that I resolved to again take part in public affairs. It was not long ere I was to look at things from quite another standpoint. I soon saw the shoals upon which absolute power was bound to wreck itself.

Further, I began to learn better to appreciate at their real significance the consequences of the Revolution, to better understand the actual situation, and consequently, France's needs. Hence did I welcome the Restoration as an era which was to bring France back to the form of government best suited to it, and that, a modified monarchical system, such, in a word, as the Charter of Louis XVIII. soon gave promise of.

Having once entered upon this line of thought, my judgments and my actions have ever been in harmony with my opinions. Thus is explained, in 1822, the date at which I began writing, the state of mind which has dictated all my words, and which has governed all my deeds.

Was I to make all the judgments which have emanated from my pen coincide with my present views of men and events?

I might, with regard to each and every fact, and to each

and every deed, award praise or condemnation, in conformity with those principles which have come to be mine own; but, I have taken special pains to avoid so doing. Had I acted thus, I should then have written history as those alone can write it who have come into existence a long time after the events which they narrate, and for whom those events have never been a subject of either pain or joy. On the contrary, I have thought that by reproducing my opinions, my sentiments, and even, in so far as feasible, my judgments on each epoch, without modification whatsoever, I would, in several instances, make known that which too frequently remains unrevealed, viz. the actual frame of mind of one's contemporaries, whether taken up and studied in their entity, or as such and such a part more or less important of the social order of which they constitute the elements.

If viewed in this connection and accepted as an indication, even my doubts and my changes of mind may still constitute history, and not the least instructive part of it at that.

With this frank explanation, there now remains for me but to take leave of my work, and resign myself to criticism, strong in the justice that I can do myself of having written about everything and everybody, without feeling, without hatred, without envy; and that my sole aim has been the truth, which I have told without subterfuge, with the view of being of service to those who seek her and who know how to extract from her those teachings with which she abounds.





# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	PAGE
Chancellor Pasquier's childhood — His early education — Relations existing between his mother and J. J. Rousseau, and between his grandfather and Voltaire — He enters the College of Juilly conducted by the Oratorians — His fellow-students, Molé, d'Etampes, Mézy, Arnauld, the author of <i>Marius à Minturnes</i> — His holidays spent at the château de Coulans, near Le Mans, and at the château of Tubeuf with Mme. Berryer, the mother of Mme. de Lamoignon — Mgr. Grimaldi, Bishop of Le Mans — Mme. de La Châtre — The part taken by the Chancellor's grandfather in the trials of M. de Lally and of M. de Labarre — An answer to the diatribes of Voltaire and La Harpe — An unpublished letter of apology from Voltaire — A young man's education under the old régime — In the world of magistracy — The cultivation of science and letters among the members of the Paris Parlement . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II

Councillor Pasquier's entry into the Parlement — The Assembly of Notables — The Ministry of M. de Calonne, then that of M. de Fourqueux, and lastly M. de Brienne — The Parlement resists the edicts — Composition of that assemblage — The *grand' chambre* — The *grand banc* of the *présidents à mortier* — Messieurs de Saint-Fargeau, d'Aligre, de Trudaine — The Parlement calls for the States-General — The Duc d'Orléans exiled — Imprisonment of Councillors Sabattier and Fréteau — Continuation of the war between the Parlement and the Court from 1787 to 1788 — Forcible carrying off and arrest of Councillors d'Épréménil and Goislard de Monsabert — The Edict summoning the States-General — Dismissal of M. de Brienne — Suicide of M. de Lamoignon — M. Necker reappears in public affairs — The Abbé Sieyès — Opening of the States-General — Thoughts on the régime which preceded the Rev-

	PAGE
olution — France's happy state from 1783 to 1789 — Corruption of the Court: excesses of luxury, looseness of manners, an irreligious, critical, and utopian spirit abroad . . . . .	22

## CHAPTER III

Councillor Pasquier at the taking of the Bastille, with Mlle. Contat, of the Comédie-Française — The theatre as the school of youth — The "première" of Beaumarchais's <i>Figaro</i> — Grétry's successes at the Opéra-Comique — The day following the 6th of October at the Tuileries; aspect presented by the king and queen — The public state of mind in 1789 — Royalist tendencies of the National Guard — The club de Valois — Grievous futility of the first emigration — The royal family's flight to Varennes — Fearful anxiety caused in Paris by the king's departure — M. de Saint-Fargeau's characteristics: his hatreds, his phlegm, his violence — Final dissolution of the Parlements — The new judiciary order — A protest from the old magistracy — The death of the Constituent Assembly — Decrees against the <i>émigrés</i> , against the priests — The pillage of the grocers' shops in Paris — The first appearance of the Phrygian cap . . . . .	55
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV

Aspect of the Palais-Royal, the centre of the revolutionary movement: the cafés, the gambling houses, the dissolute women — Louis XVI.'s mild protest against the outrage of the 20th of June — M. de La Fayette's isolation — Renewed activity of the revolutionary party — The fête of the Federation — The beautiful Mme. Fontenay, afterwards Mme. Tallien — The Queen at the Italian Opera — The attack on the Tuileries, August 10 — Anarchy's triumph — The September massacres — The Prussians enter Champagne — Reasons for the sudden retreat of the Duke of Brunswick — Affection for the monarchical system shown by the princes upon the downfall of royalty — The trial of Louis XVI. — Popular songs expressing pity for the king — The day of judgment and sentence — The execution on January 21 — Councillor Pasquier at the foot of the scaffold — Deep emotion of the crowd and public grief — The murder of M. de Saint-Fargeau — Fury of the men of the revolutionary party — The law affecting the <i>suspects</i> — Councillor Pasquier's marriage . . . . .	78
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER V

PAGE

M. Pasquier, Senior, cast into jail — A prison looked upon as an asylum — Certificates of residence and of good citizenship — Tribulations of Councillor Pasquier, while seeking refuge at Montgé, near Juilly — Generous sentiments of the <i>bourgeois</i> class of Paris — Mme. Tavaux — The <i>citoyenne</i> Mottei — Levasseur's gratitude — Pen-picture of this <i>conventionnel</i> — Citizen Félix, the brother of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau — Trial and execution of M. Pasquier, Senior — Councillor Pasquier arrested at Amiens — Sent to Saint-Lazare with Mme. Pasquier, on the 8th Thermidor — A prison during the Reign of Terror — The 9th Thermidor — The prisoners set at liberty — Fouquier-Tinville before the tribunal and on the scaffold — Ovation to Tallien and Mme. Tallien at the Odéon theatre — France after Thermidor — The Vendéans — M. and Mme. Pasquier's life at Croissy — Their intercourse with Joséphine de Beauharnais — Mme. de Beauharnais, Joséphine's sister-in-law — Exorbitant prices of provisions — Scarcity of food . . . . .	99
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VI

The 13th Vendémiaire — The Convention surrounded by 60,000 men — General Bonaparte — Failure of the uprising owing to the lack of a Royalist leader — The primary assemblies and the new elections — The daughter of Louis XVI. leaves the Temple — The reign of the Directoire — Barras and Mme. Tallien — The kindness of Mme. de Beauharnais — The return of the <i>émigrés</i> — The need of enjoyment felt — Mme. de Staël's <i>salon</i> — Benjamin Constant — M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs — The 18th Fructidor — Transportation of fallen foes — General Pichegru — Uprisings in Maine and in Brittany — The <i>chouannerie</i> — The Treaty of Campo-Formio — General Bonaparte's plans and the Directoire's mistrust — The expedition to Egypt — The Republic of Geneva united to France — Carnot's opinion in this matter — Italy occupied by French troops — State of the finances in 1799 — Establishment of the military conscription — The coalition between Austria, England, and Russia — General Suvaroff in Italy — Retreat of the French — An odious act of revenge performed by Barras — Bonaparte's return to France — The men who took part in the 18th Brumaire — Constitution of the Consular Government — Attributes of the three Consuls — Bonaparte's feelings towards the <i>émigrés</i> — The infernal machine — Georges Cadoudal and Saint-Réjant, his emissary . . . . .	130
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VII

PAGE

Bonaparte's negotiations with the Holy See — Violent opposition in the Army — Plot to assassinate the First Consul — Proclamation of the Concordat at Notre-Dame — Advantages accruing to France from the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 — Reconstruction of the Finances — Legislative work — The life consulate — Rupture between England and France, and plots hatched by the British Cabinet — Pichegru's conspiracy — Louis XVIII.'s rejoinder in this connection — Arrest of Cadoudal, Pichegru, Moreau, and the Polignacs — Pichegru's suicide — Unfounded accusations brought against Bonaparte in this respect — Kidnapping of the Duc d'Enghien at Ettenheim — M. de Caulaincourt's irresponsibility in the affair — The ultimate fate of the Duc d'Enghien discussed — Opinions of Fouché, Talleyrand, Lebrun, and Cambacérès — The First Consul's final determination — Light on the circumstances surrounding the event — Illegality of the sentence passed on the Duc d'Enghien — The part played in this affair by Savary, Talleyrand, Murat, and Réal — Joséphine's grief on hearing of the execution — Napoleon, in spite of his remorse, never admits the injustice of the act — M. d'Hauterive apostrophizes M. de Talleyrand, the instigator of the crime — Fouché's famed saying . . . . . 168

## CHAPTER VIII

Trial and sentence of Cadoudal, Moreau, and Polignac — Commutation of Moreau's penalty — The *salons* of Mme. Pastoret and of Mme. de Beaumont — Charm of the social gatherings of the period — M. de Chateaubriand and Mme. de Beaumont, the daughter of M. de Montmorin — France falls into disfavor with the rest of Europe through the execution of the Duc d'Enghien — Advantages derived therefrom by the British party — Bonaparte created Emperor — Motives inducing Pope Pius VII. to come to Paris to crown Napoleon — The new power given legitimacy to by religion — The third coalition against France — Admiral Villeneuve — M. Daru — The camp at Boulogne raised, and the sudden moving of the army into the heart of Germany — The Battle of Austerlitz — France's state of enthusiasm — Entry of M. Pasquier as *maitre des requêtes* into the Council of State . . . . . 215

## CHAPTER IX

France's state at the birth of the Empire — Organization of the imperial régime — Absolutism dominant — The deliberative assem-



## CONTENTS

XV

PAGE

blies—The freedom of the press and the liberty of the subject —Happy results abroad of the battle of Austerlitz — Negotiations for a marriage between the Princess Amélie of Bavaria and Eu- gène de Beauharnais — Confidential letter from M. de Talleyrand to M. de Thiard regarding this union — Rapid elevation of the members of the Emperor's family — Joseph, King of Naples — Murat, Grand-Duke of Berg — Louis, King of Holland — Naval engagement off Trafalgar — England's supremacy on the seas — Devoted adherence of the clergy to the Imperial Crown — France's new organization — The twofold legislation necessary towards con- stituting society — Private influences welcomed by Napoleon — Lebrun and Cambacérès — Fouché painted — M. de Talleyrand's public and private life — M. Portalis, Senior — M. Maret, Duc de Bassano — M. de Laplace — M. Chaptal . . . . .	239
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER X

The <i>Corps législatif</i> — The <i>Tribunat</i> — Creation of the Council of State and the nature of its work — The <i>comité du contentieux</i> — Principal members of the Council of State — Messieurs Defermon and Lacuée, presidents of committees — Messieurs Gaudin and Mollien, Ministers — Councillors Regnaud, Treilhard, Berlier, Merlin, and Réal — Measures demanded against the Jews — An assembly of prominent Jews called together in Paris — Messieurs Molé, Portalis, and Pasquier, as Commissioners of the Emperor in that Assembly — The "Portuguese" Jews — Declaration made by the doctors and the rabbis — M. Furtado of Bordeaux — The in- terest charged on money and usury — The practice of Jews among themselves — Sacerdotal power of the rabbis — The <i>Talmudists</i> — Convening by the Emperor of a great Sanhedrin and its meeting, February 9, 1807 — Declaration of doctrine of the great Sanhedrin on the civil and political duties of Israelites and the organization of Jewish society in France . . . . .	273
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XI

War with Prussia — France's enthusiasm after Jena — General desire  
 for a durable peace — Napoleon's threatening attitude at Berlin —  
 The continental blockade — Its hardships and prodigious results —  
 Matters leading up to war with Spain — Napoleon again prepares  
 for war — Napoleon's vast amount of correspondence — An aggres-  
 sive march made by the Russians — Battle of Eylau — An opinion

of General Jomini — The siege of Dantzic — The victory of Fried- land — The peace of Tilsit — Napoleon's influence over the Em- peror Alexander — Prussia's humiliation — Gustavus IV., King of Sweden, deprived of his crown — Denmark becomes France's ally .	PAGE 309
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------

## CHAPTER XII

Napoleon's return to Paris — A <i>Te Deum</i> sung with great pomp at Notre-Dame — Marriage of Jérôme, the new King of Westphalia, with a daughter of the King of Württemberg — Magnificence of the ceremony — M. de Talleyrand appointed Vice-Grand Elector — Strained relations between the Emperor and that diplomat — M. Pasquier appointed <i>procureur général</i> to the <i>conseil du sceau des titres</i> — The methods of M. Decrès, Minister of Marine — Abuses of the Imperial administration and denials of justice — The case of M. Pichon, ex-consul of France in America . . .	327
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIII

Secret treaty concluded between Napoleon and Godoy, Prince of Peace, and favorite of Charles IV. of Spain — Portugal invaded by the French — Abdication of the old King of Spain — His throne given to Joseph Bonaparte — Occupation of Rome by the French troops — Pius VII. addresses a comminatory brief to Napoleon — General uprising in Spain against the French, followed by the insurrection of Portugal — Junot's retreat before the British army — M. de Talleyrand once more comes upon the scene, on the occa- sion of the interview agreed upon between Napoleon and the Em- peror of Russia — The Congress of Erfurt — A study of the serious political questions discussed at this meeting of the two sovereigns — A letter from the Emperor Alexander to the Emperor Napoleon — A scrutiny of the diplomatic action of M. de Talleyrand; his astounding duplicity and the reasons of his complaisance towards Austria — The Comédie-française, with Talma, at Erfurt . . .	342
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIV

The Emperor's return — M. Pasquier entrusted with an investigation between Metz and Mayence — Entry of Marshal Victor's army	
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

corps into the latter city — A protest from Jean Bon Saint-André, Prefect of Mayence, and former member of the Committee of Public Safety — Organization of the new nobility of France — The creation of majorats with endowments — Mme. de Montmorency compelled to accept the title of countess against her will — Unopposed re-establishment in France of hereditary distinctions — The members of the <i>conseil du sceau</i> — Occupation of Madrid by Napoleon — Retreat of the British army, driven by Marshal Soult — Reasons governing the Emperor's hurried return to Paris — Austria's fresh warlike preparations — Cessation of all hostility between M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché, Minister of Police — Harmony existing between these two individuals in anticipation of Napoleon's likely death — Murat chosen by them as his successor — The discovery of this intrigue communicated to the Emperor by M. de La Valette and Prince Eugène — Napoleon violently harangues M. de Talleyrand in the Throne-room — Temporary falling into disgrace of this diplomat . . . . .	364
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XV

War with Austria — Battle of Essling — Death of Marshal Lannes — The Roman States united to the French Empire — Pius VII.'s bull of excommunication — The Pope carried off by the French authorities — Victory of Wagram — Napoleon's return and sojourn at Fontainebleau — Dissolution of Napoleon's and Josephine's marriage — The last evening spent at Fontainebleau by the discarded Empress — M. Pasquier appointed Councillor of State — Projected marriage between Napoleon and the Grand-Duchess Anne, the Emperor of Russia's sister — Austria's alarm at this projected alliance — Overtures made by the Viennese cabinet, with the object of tendering Napoleon the hand of an archduchess of Austria — Reasons which governed the Emperor in preferring such an alliance — Convocation of an extraordinary Council — Opinions expressed at it by Fouché, Talleyrand, and Cambacérès — Arrival of the future Empress at Compiègne — Celebration of the religious wedding at the Louvre — Napoleon's anger at and reprisals against the cardinals who absented themselves from the ceremony — Grand public fête on the occasion of this union — A dinner given unexpectedly to M. de Metternich, and to the Czar's ambassador — Strange and offensive explanations given to the Court of Russia to justify Napoleon's renunciation of the hand of Alexander's sister .	384
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVI

PAGE

Suffering endured by Holland consequent upon the continental blockade — Appointment of a commission of investigation presided over by M. Pasquier — M. de Labouchère sent to London on the secret initiative of King Louis, with the object of bringing about a general peace — A like attempt made by M. Fouché, with M. Ouvrard as agent — Complete failure of these overtures to the British Cabinet — These proceedings, taken unknown to the Emperor, arouse his anger — M. Ouvrard arrested, and M. Fouché sent to Rome as Governor, his place as Minister of Police being taken by the Duc de Rovigo — M. d'Hauterive's report on this intrigue — M. de Labouchère called to Paris by the Emperor — The King of Holland's version of this attempted negotiation — A pen-portrait of Louis Bonaparte — His faults and qualities — Queen Hortense — A conflict of policy between Louis and Napoleon — M. Decazes attached to the cabinet of <i>Madame mère</i> — Amsterdam occupied by French troops — King Louis's indignation at this — His abdication and final departure — Holland united to the French Empire — Napoleon's characteristic speech to the son of King Louis — Personal characteristics of the Bonapartes — Lucien, Prince of Canino — Joseph Bonaparte — Jérôme Bonaparte — Napoleon's three sisters: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline — M. Fouché again incurs disgrace — M. de Las Cases and M. Fiévée in the Council of State — Details regarding the appointment of M. Pasquier as Prefect of Police	412
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVII

The new Prefect of Police installed in office — Appointment, the same day, of Cardinal Maury to the archbishopric of Paris — Pen-portrait of this prelate — Constituent elements of the Superior Council of Police — M. Frochot, the Prefect of the Seine — A tour of inspection through the prisons — Two of the prisoners at Bicêtre: M. Desol de Grisolles, a former Chouan, and M. Nervagot, the precursor of false Dauphins — A prison registrar who had kept his place at Saint-Lazare from the days of the Terror — The Emperor's audiences: the <i>grand lever</i> and the <i>petit lever</i> — Daily reports sent to the Emperor by the Minister and by the Prefect of Police — Obstructions in the streets and boulevards of Paris — The farming out of games of chance — The Emperor's five or six police systems checking each other — The guard exercised by the police over the Tuileries — Measures for the safety of the Emperor — The prying into the secrecy of correspondence	439
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVIII

PAGE

Official announcement of the pregnancy of the Empress Marie-Louise	
— The Pope's refusal to grant bulls of installation to several bishops—An ecclesiastical commission called together by Napoleon to remedy the embarrassment thus created by the Holy See—Findings of this commission with regard to apostolic bulls, to an appeal to a general council, and to pontifical fulminations—New appointments made by the Emperor to the vacant sees of Paris and of Nancy—Briefs issued by Pius VII. against these appointments—Cardinal Fesch's opposition to Napoleon's wishes—The Paris Chapter agitates against Cardinal Maury—Violent allocution by the Emperor, on New Year's Day, 1811, to the Vicars-General, and his apostrophe to the Abbé d'Astros, whose arrest is ordered—Napoleon's violent outburst, at the Council of State, against M. Portalis, the confidant of the Abbé d'Astros—This councillor exiled, in spite of M. Pasquier's intercession—A search made in the very closet of the Pope at Savona—Arrest of several prelates and members of the Sacred College—The French clergy thrown into a state of terror . . . . .	460

## CHAPTER XIX

Inner administration of the Préfecturé de Police—Singular use made of confiscated books—The fate of political writings—Secret agents of the Government—Inspector-General Veyrat—The clerk Perlet—General Danican—Reforms and improvements brought about by M. Pasquier—Measures concerning domestic servants—Personnel of the medical dispensary attached to the Préfecture—The Fire Brigade reorganized on a military basis—The provisioning of Paris—The relations existing between the Prefect of Police and his subordinate <i>commissaires</i> . . . . .	480
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XX

Retreat in Spain of Masséna, the greatest warrior after Napoleon—Consequences of the dissensions between Ney and Masséna—Marmont in command—Marshal Suchet in Catalonia—Birth of the King of Rome—Joy of Napoleon and the nation—Haughty speech of the Emperor at the opening of the <i>Corps législatif</i> —Convocation of a National ecclesiastical council—A deputation of	
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--



bishops sent to Savona to wait upon the Pope—First sitting of the council, in the Archiepiscopal Palace in Paris, on the 17th of June—Serious difficulties between the Fathers of the Council and Napoleon—Energetic opposition shown by the Archbishop of Bordeaux and several bishops—Dissolution of the Council by a decree dated the 10th of July—Arrest, and imprisonment at Vincennes, of the Bishops of Tournay, Troyes, and Ghent—Deplorable effect produced by these deeds of coercion—Fears of a schism—Negotiations to ward off such a danger—Fresh meeting of the Council—A delegation of prelates again sent to the Pope, who finally grants a brief of approval—The papal brief rejected by the Council of State—Pius VII. refuses to make any further concessions—The imprisoned bishops restored to freedom on condition of resigning—Impolitic conduct of Napoleon towards the Church . . . . . 494

## CHAPTER XXI

The gambling-house lease—Accusations brought against M. de Rovigo—A committee of investigation appointed in the matter—New regulations governing gambling-houses—M. Pasquier and the Duc de Rovigo—The harvest of 1811—System adopted with regard to the distribution of bread—Necessity for protective measures against the dishonesty of bakers and consumers—The reserve stock of provisions placed under official control—Bread becomes scarce—Gradual increase in the price of articles of food—Napoleon's desire to re-establish a "maximum" law—His distrust of merchants—M. Pasquier's propositions to the *Comité des subsistances*—Official report of the proceedings of the extraordinary council held at the Emperor's, with a view of warding off distress—Riots and pillaging by famished bands—Severe measures of repression—The price of wheat determined by law . 520

## CHAPTER XXII

The draft of 1812 and the new organization of the National Guard—Napoleon's grievances against Russia—Treaties of alliance between France, Prussia, and Austria—Sweden's political situation under the pressure exercised over it by Napoleon—Negotiations and final understanding of Bernadotte with Russia and England—Fêtes and magnificent balls during the winter of 1811-1812—

## CONTENTS

xxi .

### PAGE

Secret societies formed by the students of Northern Germany — A plot to assassinate Napoleon — A Leipsic student reaches Paris with this object in view; his arrest and imprisonment — Treason committed by an official of the War Office bribed by Russia — Vidocq, the detective, discovers a counterfeiter — The manufacture on an extended scale of counterfeit notes of the Bank of Russia and of the Bank of Vienna, countenanced by the Emperor's police — Conversation between M. Pasquier and Napoleon, on the eve of the latter's departure for the Russian campaign .	542
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----



# MEMOIRS OF CHANCELLOR PASQUIER

## CHAPTER I

Chancellor Pasquier's childhood — His early education — Relations existing between his mother and J. J. Rousseau, and between his grandfather and Voltaire — He enters the College of Juilly conducted by the Oratorians — His fellow-students, Molé, d'Etampes, Mézy, Arnould, the author of *Marius à Minturnes* — His holidays spent at the château de Coulans, near Le Mans, and at the château of Tubeuf with Mme. Berryer, the mother of Mme. de Lamoignon — Mgr. Grimaldi, Bishop of Le Mans — Mme. de La Châtre — The part taken by the Chancellor's grandfather in the trials of M. de Lally and of M. de Labarre — An answer to the diatribes of Voltaire and La Harpe — An unpublished letter of apology from Voltaire — A young man's education under the old régime — In the world of magistracy — The cultivation of science and letters among the members of the Paris Parlement.

THE old régime, the one preceding the Revolution of 1793, was not a sealed book to me; I was already of this world ere its downfall.

My memory, which has always served me pretty faithfully, still supplies me with details which may perhaps prove not uninteresting to those desirous of becoming acquainted with the habits, usages, and manners of a century from which they are only separated by a little over fifty years, but which, nevertheless, in consequence of the number of stupendous events that have followed one another, are as little known to the present generation as if two or three hundred years had rolled by.

This is especially the case with regard to the time of the Empire, the ideas and manners of which are unknown. All that one remembers of that period are its battles, and this, but imperfectly. The Restoration, which is so near us, and of which was born the constitutional régime, has barely left behind the memory of the July ordinances, and of those three days which brought about its downfall. Is it therefore a matter of surprise that the closing years of Louis XV. and the whole reign of Louis XVI. should be so completely unknown?

I saw the light of day in 1767, in the midst of surroundings which seemed to presage a peaceful life, and a large fortune which never descended to me; my early education was to feel the effects of the craze inspired by the methods taught by Rousseau, and I accordingly suffered greatly therefrom. Under the pretence of hardening me to the inclemencies of the weather during a couple of severe winters (I was then in my fourth and fifth years), I was taken to the gardens of the Tuileries, while but lightly clad. There, it was asserted, I should surely obtain warmth by taking exercise. I was told to run about; but the cold deprived me of the necessary strength to obey, so the result of this system was to make me one of the most chilly of mortals.

It was an all-powerful and doubtless excusable influence which the passionate eloquence of the citizen of Geneva exercised in those days over imaginations, especially over those of women. I have learnt since then that my mother had felt unable to resist the very natural desire of seeing at short range that so celebrated, so extraordinary Jean-Jacques. In order to meet him, she had availed herself of the pretence, then in general vogue, of taking to him some music for the purpose of having it copied. My mother was a woman of bright intellect, and the charm of her conversation was potent enough to cause the alleged philosopher to



express a desire of meeting her again. The exile into which the Parlement went in 1771 put an end to this intercourse.

I was vaccinated at a time when few people submitted to this operation. An English physician, Horloch by name, whose settling down in Paris preceded that of the Sutons, was called in in the case of one of my mother's brothers, who was ill with smallpox. No hope was entertained of saving him, yet Horloch pulled him through. My mother, while in a state of pregnancy, also became a victim of this pitiless disease; her physician, the famed Bouvard, had given as his opinion that my father must resign himself to lose either wife or child. Horloch's services were once more called into requisition, and he saved both lives. Following upon so pronounced a result, he proposed to vaccinate me. My father consented, but he was unable to obtain my mother's consent to my sister's submitting to a like operation. Shortly afterwards, my sister was very ill with smallpox, and as a result, bore its marks all her life.

This opposition of my mother's would be difficult to understand, were it not for the fact that in those days, among truly religious people, and my mother was of the number, there were many who thought that it was tempting God to give to a human creature an ailment which might perhaps not have come in the course of nature. Such was also the opinion of a considerable portion of the clergy.

My bringing up was to bear the twofold imprint of the old ideas, of the customs of a world which was about to disappear, and of the essentially innovating spirit of irreligion and of philosophy which had developed during the last fifty years. That spirit met with but scanty recognition in the bosom of my family, wherein was deeply implanted the entirely opposite trend of ideas of the old magistracy of which my grandfather, who died in 1783, was the faithful representative.

A fellow-student of Voltaire, with whom he had been in the class of *rhétorique*, under the most famed of the professors of the great Jesuits' College, Father Porée, he had not been carried away by the teachings of the Voltairean and encyclopædic school, whose influence came to nought in the face of his sound reason and his firmly established principles in the matter of religion. His sincere piety bore no trace of exaggeration. He avoided argument over these matters, and was content to testify to his belief by a faithful observance of its practices. I can recall a circumstance which has since often presented itself to my mind. He was nearly eighty years of age, and I was then about twelve, when I went to spend my holidays with him at the château de Coulans. At that time, he exercised a particularly watchful care over my education. Every Sunday we heard mass in one of the chapels of the château, and, one Sunday, the server being absent, I saw my grandfather, after casting a most significant glance at me, leave his seat, and kneel down at the place of the server, who, fortunately, soon arrived and relieved him of that fatiguing posture.

My early education was not fortunate as regards the knowledge of things pertaining to man. Its most painful stumbling-block was, at its outset, a strange peculiarity of my memory. Although this faculty, in my case, is able, in certain matters, to retain facts to an extended degree, and has most faithfully served me during the course of my career, it has always rebelled against keeping anything word for word. My troubles in this respect began at an early age. My mother, who enjoyed in the highest degree the faculty which I lacked, could not understand how it was that I should be deprived of it; hence, from my earliest childhood, she sought to impose upon me tasks which I could not possibly accomplish, with the result of my incurring many a scolding, and punishments innumerable.

The education of children, which is at present conducted in so gentle a fashion, was then, on the part of the greater number of parents, carried on with great severity. Just as it is to-day, its fault was not to take sufficiently into account a child's natural aptitudes, to exact of each and every child the same things, the same efforts. It often arises that by demanding of children certain work of which they are incapable, one neglects faculties from which great benefit might be derived.

Upon reaching the age of seven, I was given a tutor. Two of them followed in succession; the first one fell somewhat too much into my mother's mistake with regard to the limitations of my memory; he was a learned man, and very painstaking with me, but he was hard and severe. He sought to obtain of me more than my delicate state of health and the amount of attention I could give to study would allow. His place was taken by the man who perhaps resembled him the least. This scheme was not a fortunate one, for both tutors failed to fulfil the expectations of my parents. At the same time, it is hardly to be denied that private tuition is seldom a success, not one of the least of its defects being the changes of system to which the pupil is exposed.

I must add, that, barring a few rare exceptions, such an education is, to my mind, full of dangers, and that most frequently its effects on health and character are most disastrous. In the matter of health, the lack of exercise is fatal to the development of physical strength, and gives birth to that sense of being bored which, at all periods of life, is so hard to endure.

I was eleven and a half years old when I was sent to Juilly. In those years studies were gotten through at a rapid rate, which makes it allowable to believe, with some show of reason, that they were not of the most extended

kind. The Juilly College was presided over by the Oratorians, and was the most renowned of their educational institutions.

Father Petit, who was at that time the Father Superior, enjoyed a well-deserved consideration; he had several clever colleagues, among them Father Mandar, whose reputation in the pulpit was sufficiently established for him to appear on the list of preachers to the king. He was entrusted with the duty of preparing the pupils for their first communion, and I owe it to him that I performed this great act of my life with the deepest assent of both heart and reason. The impression left in my mind on that day was as dear as it was solemn, and the recollection of it has oftentimes come back to me full of charm.

It is well enough known that the Oratorians were more in touch with Jansenism than with Molinism. To that was due the selection made, by my mother, of a college under their direction; her profound devotion had gained her over to Jansenism, whose doctrines and practices she followed. This party's most prominent members, by their intellect and by their knowledge, had grouped themselves about her; from their inspirations she derived not only the rules governing her life, but the sense of duty with which she sought to inspire her children. Father Mandar had not made of me a doctor of divinity, but a neophyte full of faith and of good resolutions.

Vacation time restored me to my family for a couple of months. My mother questioned me as to my knowledge of religion, and found me deplorably ignorant. In order to remedy this state of affairs, she placed in my hands a Naples catechism in three or four volumes, which I was obliged to devour during my holidays. This catechism was the text-book passionately adopted by all who were somebody in the ranks of Jansenism. The compulsory study of

it was to me head splitting, and through it my mind became so confused, that the calm and regularity of college life, and especially the gentle simplicity of the teachings of the Fathers alone restored it to its natural state.

It is difficult not to think that those who to-day maintain that public education is nowadays conducted on as religious a basis as ever it was, did not see with their own eyes what was taking place during the epoch which they cite for purposes of comparison, or do not preserve a right recollection of it. The religious bodies were more particular in this respect than were the secular colleges, but the difference between them was a small one; even in the institutions where philosophical ideas were dominant, outward manifestations of devotion were too strictly exacted for it to be possible to neglect them.

I had for school-fellows, Molé, d'Etampes, Mézy (the last named remained my most intimate friend to the day of his death), Arnould, of the Académie française; his intellect was then still undeveloped, and he was morose and melancholy. No astonishment ever equalled mine, when, a few years later, after the performance of *Marius à Minturnes*, I discovered that the playwright was no other than my old schoolmate. His subsequent career is well known.

Our holidays were wont to take place at the time of the adjournment of the Parlement. My grandfather would take me with him to Coulans or to Tubeuf, to the house of his oldest female friend,—Mme. Berryer.

Great used to be the joy of the old High Chamber councillor, to return home after the long months of his laborious life. He would say farewell to his records as the schoolboy said *au revoir* to his dictionaries. This peaceable and happy life, following upon duties bravely grappled with, restored the man to the softening joys of the family circle; country life and healthy enjoyments gave new vigor to his old age



by making him experience once more the emotions of his younger days.

The demesne of Coulans, which had been in the possession of my family for a long period, and which had been created a barony in its favor, is situated at a distance of three leagues from Le Mans, in a province which was within the jurisdiction of the Paris Parlement, and this circumstance was greatly responsible for the consideration enjoyed by its occupants. The social life of members of the Parlement, when their estates were far distant from Paris and especially from Versailles, was on a grand scale, and the highest of the nobility paid them great attentions.

Conveyancing and the settlement of estates gave rise to numerous lawsuits. Their influence was often sought after; the members of the many inferior governing bodies showed much zeal in doing them homage. Everything conspired towards securing for them, when they showed themselves worthy of it, the most honored and envied existence.

My ancestors had done everything to deserve this, and so it came that in the town of Le Mans, in the neighborhood of their home, they had many friends, selected from among the most distinguished people of the province. Le Mans, although far from being a town of importance, could nevertheless produce the best elements of society, for, in the ranks of the nobility, of the magistracy, of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and landowners, there were to be found men of worth, educated, distinguished in manner, women of bright intellect, agreeable, fond of pleasure, and inspiring all their circle with a taste for it. It was an easy-going and somewhat giddy society, whose faults, — and this illustrates the manners of that epoch, — were overlooked with more than indulgence by the higher clergy.

The bishopric of Le Mans was one of those most coveted. Its revenues were considerable; the episcopal palace was a

very fine one, which had, as a dependency, a charming country-seat about one league distant from the town. This see had for some time been occupied by prelates of high birth, grave men who scrupulously fulfilled the duties of their holy ministry. Upon its becoming vacant in the last years of the reign of Louis XV., it was given to the Abbé Grimaldi, a young ecclesiastic, the scion of a great house, most agreeable as to his personality, his intellect, and his remarkably graceful manner. A very pleasant companion, he showed himself capable of a devoted friendship to those whom he honored by counting them among his friends, and he gave a proof of this in the choice of the vicars-general with whom he saw fit to surround himself. They were, generally speaking, younger sons whom fortune had not favored much, and who had entered the Church merely as a way to a happier condition of affairs. While on terms of friendship with them during the years he spent at the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, he had promised to summon them to be with him, as soon as he should be a bishop. He made good his promise, and on his arrival at Le Mans, he was accompanied by a flock of vicars-general, who quickly set the bishopric on a footing entirely different from that to which people had hitherto been accustomed.

They contracted acquaintances in the several social circles, becoming specially attached to those wherein they could contract the most agreeable connections. The bishop viewed this life of excitement, if not with a complacent, at least with a very indulgent eye. His pastoral excursions through his diocese were few and far between, and long did he tarry in the châteaux where he found a society to his taste.

The château de Coulans was one of those which he felt pleasure in visiting. His visits began at the time the Parlement was exiled by M. de Maupeou. The ready wit

of my mother was a source of infinite delight to him, and the lectures she read him in no unsparing fashion were always listened to with the best of temper.

Mgr. Grimaldi embellished his country-seat, and made a delightful habitation of it; his garden was laid out in English fashion, doubtless a novelty in the province. He left the bishopric of Le Mans to pass on to a higher see, that of Noyon, when the Revolution drove him to England, where, I believe, he ended his days. While in that country not only was he strict in the observances of his religion, but austere, and very intolerant towards the bishops, his colleagues, and to the priests, who, in 1800, believed it to be their duty not to refuse their support to France's government.

The regiment at that time stationed at Le Mans was the *dragons de Monsieur*, commanded by M. de La Châtre. The officers under his orders were most brilliant and distinguished, and belonged to the best families; they enjoyed high favor at Court, and were all men of elegance and fashion.

M. de La Châtre owned at a short distance from Le Mans a somewhat fine demesne, and his château of Malicorne, to which Mme. de La Châtre frequently came to play the part of hostess, was the rendezvous of all the grand folks of the province, it may be even added, to speak like Corneille, the abode of gallantry.

Mme. de La Châtre's austerity was not of a very imposing sort; a leader of fashion, she was ever in quest of all that tended to give enjoyment to château life, and she sought to bear with patience her separation from a man who had shown her a most passionate attachment. It is not to be wondered at that quarrels, duels, and scandals became of frequent occurrence in a district formerly so peaceable, several of them ending tragically.

We were in the habit of spending the last days of our

vacation at Tubeuf, a spacious and fine château built of brick, surrounded with a broad moat, standing in the midst of an extensive park containing pine trees hundreds of years old. A life of simplicity was passed within its walls, there being none of that elegant display which had already made such progress. The furniture had once been magnificent, but was now out of fashion. I can still remember the furniture of the drawing-room, the arm-chairs and hangings of yellow satin brought from China forty years before, and ornamented with silken knots, which Mme. Berryer's shuttle had woven. According to the custom in olden days, there was a large household; two or three old valets engaged in working tapestry were always to be found in the ante-chamber of the principal drawing-room.

Mme. Berryer, the widow of the M. Berryer who had in succession filled several important official positions (he had even been a cabinet minister under Louis XV.), was the mother of Mme. de Lamoignon. She was the possessor of a large fortune. The delicate state of her health bound her down to the strictest of diets, and so she lived in the most frugal manner, while her table was sumptuously supplied. She clung to life by a mere thread, in spite of which, borne up by a moral energy seldom met with, she lived to see the first years of the new century. Endowed with an acute and well-balanced mind, having spent her life among men engaged in public affairs, having in consequence seen and learnt much, she possessed in the highest degree the talent to manage her *salon*, and to give to each member of it his place, while always occupying the position which was hers.

This dignified social circle did not, however, set its face against amusements of good taste, and of an intellectual kind. Thalia had her stage in a little theatre set up in the orangery. I can remember having, at the age of eleven or twelve, played a part in one of those pieces which could

certainly not give offence to the most severe sticklers for propriety, as it was the work of one of the many clergymen attached to the seignior of Tubeuf.

The demesne of Tubeuf was one of those in France wherein the seignior had the patronage of the greatest number of livings, eleven or twelve, I think, all of them richly endowed. The exercise of so extended a right brought with it a great responsibility, which Mme. Berryer always fully recognized. In order therefore to lighten the burden of it, she had taken all proper precautions, and had surrounded herself with a sort of council which enlightened her in regard to her appointments, a matter on which she was, moreover, in full accord with her bishop.

The large family of M. de Lamoignon (he had three sons and four daughters, of whom two, at the time whereof I speak, were already married) was in the habit of spending a few days at Tubeuf in the month of September, and then returning to Basville, where M. de Lamoignon was working out his ruin.

M. de Lamoignon's third daughter, Mlle. Louise, had been entrusted to the care of her grandmother, Mme. Berryer. She was a charming creature, and I can still remember, in spite of the sixty-six years which have since elapsed, the gentle and sincere girl with whom I spent most of my evenings, sitting by her side at a large harpsichord whereon she practised the music taught to her by Balbatre, then the teacher most in vogue.

The magnificent matrimonial alliance which Mlle. Louise de Lamoignon was shortly to contract was due to the confidence inspired by the education which she had received under the wing of her grandmother. It was doubtless natural that the name of Lamoignon should ally itself with that of Molé; but the gravity that pervaded the manners of



the *hôtel* Molé and of the château of Champlatreux, would have ill accommodated itself to a young girl educated amid the noisy tumult of Basville.

I lost my grandfather in the winter of 1783. He did not fall a victim to any properly defined malady; on the day of his death, his friend, Mme. Berryer, had parted from him at one o'clock, after a lengthy conversation which had left no apparent traces of fatigue; at two o'clock he had passed away. His end was a peaceful one. God had reserved such an end for him, as a compensation for the work and turmoil of his long career. The parliamentary struggles, in the last years of the reign of Louis XV., had brought much worry and work in their wake; they were brought to a termination by the suppression of the Parlement, and by the exile of all its members, during the ministry of M. de Maupeou.

Among the cases in which my grandfather played an important part, two had more especially caused him much pain and trouble, viz. the trial of M. de Lally, at which he was *rapporteur*, and that of Labarre, with regard to a sacrilege committed at Abbeville. However violent might be the criticisms to which the decisions in these two cases gave birth, he had made it a law unto himself not to reply to them, respecting in so doing the feeling which animated the efforts of the son of M. de Lally, to obtain a reversal of the judgment which had condemned his father to death. Once only, provoked by the diatribes of M. de Voltaire, he wrote to him, complaining of the unfairness of his attacks. After his death, I found Voltaire's reply among his papers, and it is still in my possession.

In 1801, the same calumnious statements were reproduced in the Correspondence of La Harpe, which was being published in the *Journal des Débats*. I thought it my duty to reply as follows, while publishing Voltaire's letter: —

As you have seen fit, Sir, to print in your journal the article of the Correspondence of M. de La Harpe, having reference to the death of M. de Voltaire, you will doubtless not refuse to print also a letter of Voltaire himself; it will do duty as an answer to that article, in so far as my grandfather is concerned. Reasons specially inherent to the duties of his position, and, above all, the testimony of his conscience to which he owed the bold contempt in which he ever held calumny, were the cause that made him decide not to make public this letter, even after the death of M. de Voltaire. His principles did not allow him, contrariwise to the example shown since by so many people, I will not say, to make bad use, but even to make use of everything written to him in the intimacy of the closet, and in the freedom of a confidential and private correspondence. He sought, doubtless, for his own satisfaction, to draw from M. de Voltaire an avowal which he felt sure the latter could not refuse, looking to the strength and clearness of the evidence he would place before him, but he stopped short at that, and considered himself sufficiently avenged. It must have cost M. de Voltaire an effort to write that letter, and to entrust to a man who had cause for complaint against him the secret of his inconsistencies, and of his levity in matters so serious and of so high an importance.

M. de Voltaire did not have any cause to repent having trusted to the generosity of a character to which he felt bound to pay the tribute of his *sincere esteem*, nay, even his *reverence*.

I do not know what it was that can have led M. de La Harpe to introduce random assertions into a correspondence styled by him a literary one. The indiscretion with which he allows himself to recall memories which years long past and so many recent misfortunes had effaced from the mind, to once more lay bare wounds which had had time to heal, this indiscretion alone made me decide upon resenting the ill-considered attack, which I had so little cause to expect.

Still I delayed doing so, as long as I saw the attack buried in the numerous pages of four stout volumes; but now that, standing out by itself in the *feuilleton* of a journal of repute, it has necessarily acquired greater publicity and more prominent notice, I should certainly fail in what I owe to the memory of an ancestor whom I have so many reasons to cherish and to reverence, were I not to make use of the means I hold to crush the calumny which relentlessly pursues him twenty years after his demise. It is, as I believe, a sacred duty for me to perform, and, if any one could be found to cast a doubt on

the lawfulness of my efforts, I should wish for no other judge than M. de Lally-Tollendal himself, than that courageous son, who, in so unfortunate a case, has known how to do so much for the memory of his father, who received everybody's praise for it, and considerations for whose feelings has caused me, for over the three months during which this correspondence has been published, to preserve a silence which I at last break only with the deepest regret.

## M. DE VOLTAIRE'S LETTER.

“FERNEY, September 20th, 1776.

“SIR, — I have to acknowledge the receipt of the letter with which you honor me. My eighty-year-old eyes experience much difficulty in reading it, and my aged reason gives me to understand that I ought never to have written.

“I can clearly see that the greed of a few publishers has imputed to me several works which are not mine, and has tampered with those of which I have unfortunately been the author. I have seen four editions of the writing of which you speak, and those four editions are absolutely dissimilar.

“If I might reasonably hope or fear to live a few years more, I would bring out myself a correct edition which I would acknowledge, and you would certainly not have any reason to be dissatisfied with it.

“My family, Sir, which has had the honor of frequently enjoying your society, has taught me what is due to your personal merit, to your eloquence and to your real goodness of heart, and I feel such confidence in that goodness that I will frankly confess to you the way in which the matters you refer to were brought about.

“It is the son of the brave, unfortunate, and indiscreet officer of whom you speak, who, under the influence of the most legitimate, if not the most excusable, despair, wrote the memoirs of which use has been made, and you will no doubt find an excuse for a son who seeks to vindicate his father.

“Since you encourage me, Sir, to make to you avowals of which I feel sure that a man of your rank and years will not take unfair advantage, I will, moreover, tell you that a most upright friend of an unfortunate young man, who would have become one of France's best officers, having escaped the terrible fate that overtook this young friend of his, as imprudent as upright, spent two whole years with me between France and Geneva.

"This young man, who was treated as cruelly as his friend, has become one of the best engineers in Europe. I was fortunate enough to procure a situation for him from a great king who is cognizant of and rewards his merit. I beg it as a favor that you will forgive him also. And verily, all that we must do at the age which you and I, Sir, have reached, is to spend our last days in forgiving. When, on the brink of the grave, one looks back upon all one has seen during the course of one's life, one shudders at the thought of so many fearful happenings. Happy he who can say with Horace:—

*'Senior ac melior fit accidente senectâ.'*

"I wish you, Sir, a better state of health than mine, a prolonged enjoyment of the esteem in which you are held, of rest after all your labors, and the indulgence so necessary in the case of mankind, whose weakness and misery you are familiar with.

"I have the honor to be, with great respect, sincere esteem, and reverence, Sir. . . ."

It is unnecessary to point out to you, Sir, or to those who will read the foregoing letter of M. de Voltaire, that it does not constitute one of those disclaimers which he so frequently indulged in in the periodicals of the day with regard to works to which he did not dare affix his name. Here it is, on the contrary, in a case wherein he had been pleased to play an important part, wherein, far from having anything to fear, he had seen nothing but the renown to be derived from it; it is on the simple but terrible provocative challenge of an honest man to speak the truth that he becomes troubled, that his conscience forces from him a private disavowal; it is when he is unable to reply to the reasons put before him, to the remonstrances addressed to him, and that, quietly and without publicity, it is thus that he determines upon making another shoulder the responsibility of a work in which he gloried perhaps but a few minutes before, and upon begging on behalf of another the forgiveness which he did not dare to hope for for himself; thus it is, I repeat, that when no other power than truth and his conscience compel him to do so, he is lavish with the assurance of his *esteem, consideration, reverence*, in the case of the man whom he has so cruelly injured, and to whose honor he does not fear to entrust testimony so damaging to himself.

People may now judge between Voltaire and my grandfather.

After leaving college, I took up the study of law without

giving any great attention to it. With all the young men of that period, it seemed to me that the best use to which I could put my time was to ride, to fence, and to take lessons in dancing. Rarely did Christian de Lamoignon, de Monbreton, and I go and listen to the lectures of M. Saresté. We did not lose much by this conduct, for the first work which he put into our hands, and upon which he was wont to comment for our benefit, was the *Contrat social*. This incident fully illustrated the ruling spirit abroad in those days. Things had greatly changed since the days when clever jurists, the pride of both the French bar and bench, trained themselves for the future.

How does it happen that from so imperfect an instruction, there should have sprung men who, in every walk of life, especially in the magistracy, where a solid grounding is necessary, filled important posts during difficult times, with distinction? The reason therefor is a simple one. A man's entry into public life began then much earlier than it does now; he entered upon his career at an earlier age; at the age of fifteen he went into the army; at fifteen into the navy; and the officers of that body were considered to be the best educated in Europe. It is true that a man had to be somewhat older before joining the engineers; at the age of twenty, its officers were practically and theoretically well versed in their duties; the place they held in 1792 in the French army proves the truth of this assertion. One could enter the ranks of the magistracy at the age of twenty; at twenty-five, one enjoyed a deliberative voice in the councils.

The custom prevailing in the Parlements was followed in the case of the inferior jurisdictions, and it is well known how numerous they were. The same may be said with regard to the *Cour des comptes*, the *Cour des aides*, etc. In the civil service proper, *i.e.* in the department of all the



financial bureaus, there was no rule governing the age of admission, and, generally speaking, they were open to one at a very precocious age. One could not exact of young men who sought to enter the various public services conditions for admission as severe as those set for those who nowadays present themselves after a course of studies which has brought them to their twenty-second or twenty-third year. Was this for the better or for the worse? With regard to the army and navy, I have already stated that in regard to scientific attainments French officers were superior to those of other nations. And yet, they did not know the tenth part of what those who nowadays come out of the preparatory schools are familiar with.

There is the fullest justification for saying that Vauban himself could not have passed the examination in which a candidate for admission to the Polytechnic School must nowadays be successful.

Great store has ever been set on the special technical education acquired at school, but that alone is not sufficient. There remain physical and moral qualities to be acquired elsewhere. There are two educations, the one supplementing the other. The first is the result of special or of classical studies; but, following upon it, comes the education which is the result of the centre in which the young man lives on leaving school, of the examples, of the impressions, of the traditions which he gathers. Nowadays, this latter education has lost the better part of its value and of its power. The young man who does not begin to enter life till he is twenty-two or twenty-three years old, thinks that there is nothing left for him to learn; he entertains oftentimes the most absolute confidence in himself, and the most profound disdain for all who do not share the ideas, the opinions he has already conceived unto himself.

It was different under the preceding régime.

Youth, to whom the world was open at so early an age, entered it with diffidence, unable even to hide its shortcomings from itself. To this must be added the fact that the world into which a young man had to make his way, was full of intellect and distinction, solidly established on the basis of an unchangeable hierarchy, consecrated by time, and that in it one was born, one had to live, and one was to die.

I will select as an example the world into which I was admitted at the age of seventeen, that of the magistracy in which the Paris Parlement held so large a place. In spite of the influence already at this date exercised over it by the manners of the century, the daily habits preserved a somewhat serious demeanor, blended in the case of a goodly number of families with a sufficiently elegant mode of living, in the case of many with a pronounced taste for the enjoyments of the mind, and in the case of a few with an extensive acquaintance with the highest sciences. Thus it was that the Parlement could boast of possessing within its body President Sarron, the whole of whose leisure time was devoted with much success to astronomical research, and M. Dionis du Séjour, who followed d'Alembert closely in the higher regions of geometry. Literature had likewise its votaries, for M. Ferrand wrote tragedies, while M. Favier even allowed himself to produce comic operas, but be it admitted, not under his name. That of *Paul et Virginie* was one of his children.

Hence it was that more than thirty *salons* where there was no lack of agreeable and solid conversations opened their doors to me. These conversations took all the more hold of one, because they were carried on, as a rule, among persons who were in the habit of meeting frequently and of exchanging ideas. Large assemblages were rare; no more

than thirty or forty people were wont to be brought together.

No sooner had I been admitted into this social circle than I felt my ignorance and a strong desire to remedy it. It was at that time that there came to me a taste for assiduous and careful reading, a taste that has never since left me.

I thereupon began to attend the classes of the newly-established *lycée*.

The professors were M. de La Harpe, M. de Fourcroy, M. Garat, M. de Parcieux, in fact, nearly all the men who had made a reputation in the domains of science or of letters. The best element of Parisian society flocked to attend their lectures, deriving therefrom, in addition to a deal of personal instruction, subjects for conversation. It is difficult to form a conception nowadays of this intellectual movement.

Previous to 1788, politics occupied but a small place in it; but new works, theatrical plays, the heaviest as well as the lightest productions of literature, were continually taken up and reviewed, to become the objects of opinions and controversies, wherein well-trained minds would display all their resources. I seem to live over again the day on which appeared the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*, a work which of itself furnished material for a whole winter's conversations, and, in fact, it would have been hard to supply more agreeable subject matter.

As regards myself, that second education at the hands of the world, the power of which I have noted, began from the very moment that I returned to the paternal mansion. Not a day passed there but that, either during or after dinner, some conversation took place between my father and some of his friends or colleagues, over such matters as had during the day engaged the attention of the *Palais*, either in the

courts, or in the interior of the *grand' chambre*. In these discussions, both sides of the questions were taken up, and the merits of the advocates, of the *rapporteurs*, and of the opinions emitted, were appreciated at their value.

These teachings left a strong impression on a mind which could full well feel their value, and which ardently desired to be some day in a condition to take part in them.

Once having entered the Parlement, and ere enjoying deliberative voice in it, it was very instructive to be present for five years, during all the debates. This novitiate completed that second education, the value of which I have tried to demonstrate.

## CHAPTER II

Councillor Pasquier's entry into the Parlement—The Assembly of Notables—The Ministry of M. de Calonne, then that of M. de Fourqueux, and lastly M. de Brienne—The Parlement resists the edicts—Composition of that assemblage—The *grand' chambre*—The *grand banc* of the *présidents à mortier*—Messieurs de Saint-Fargeau, d'Aligre, de Trudaine—The Parlement calls for the States-General—The Duc d'Orléans exiled—Imprisonment of Councillors Sabattier and Fréteau—Continuation of the war between the Parlement and the Court from 1787 to 1788—Forcible carrying off and arrest of Councillors d'Épréménil and Goislard de Monsabert—The Edict summoning the States-General—Dismissal of M. de Brienne—Suicide of M. de Lamoignon—M. Necker reappears in public affairs—The Abbé Sieyès—Opening of the States-General—Thoughts on the régime which preceded the Revolution—France's happy state from 1783 to 1789—Corruption of the Court: excesses of luxury, looseness of manners, an irreligious, critical, and utopian spirit abroad.

I BECAME a councillor of the Parlement of Paris in the course of my twentieth year. It occurred in the month of January, 1787, at a time when all minds were engrossed with the proposed convocation of the assembly of notables.

M. de Calonne had required special powers from Chancery to allow of his last loan of eighty millions appearing on the public ledger. He needed another sixty millions to meet the expenditure of 1786, and, not daring to brave the Parlement once more, he had conceived the idea of an assembly of notables from whom he hoped to obtain, for his various projects, a kind of national sanction which would make him independent of parliamentary resistance. He had the intention of obtaining approval for the conversion of the *impôt des vingtièmes* into a territorial subvention to be

derived in equal proportions from all properties, even those of the clergy. He was desirous of seeing the customs' barriers moved to the very limits of the kingdom, of finally abolishing statute-labor, and of replacing it by a pecuniary tax to be assessed on a just basis.

With a view of securing a better acceptance of these changes, he proposed to create provincial assemblies in all the provinces which did not possess legislative bodies of their own. There was perhaps some good in these plans, but M. de Calonne's levity of mind was an obstacle to his taking such measures as were necessary for their adoption. He had not given sufficient attention to the composition of that assembly, and had, under a pressure which he knew not how to resist, suffered men most likely to raise troubles for him, to enter it. It was in that assembly that M. de La Fayette made his *début*. The ground chosen by him was of a nature to conciliate popular favor. He prayed for the suppression of the *lettres de cachet* and of state prisons. A little later, he supplemented this prayer with one that Protestants should have their civil status restored to them, and with another calling for the immediate convocation of the nation's representatives.

As to M. de Calonne, his plans were not completely matured at the time of the opening of the assembly; uncertainty still reigned with regard to certain of them, even at this important moment. This was known, and necessarily taken advantage of. Everybody knows how he was overthrown by the very notables whom he had called together; how, after the short-lived ministry of M. de Fourqueux, the intrigues of the Court, which had placed at the head of affairs this remarkably incapable man, with the sole object of finding time to get ready other batteries, were at last successful, in spite of Louis XVI.'s personal repugnance, to place M. de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, at the head of



the ministry. He was at first entrusted only with the administration of the Treasury, but it was not long ere he was appointed Prime Minister.

The judge who held the position of Keeper of the Seal was inclined to give him countenance in his mad enterprises. He bore one of the greatest names in the ranks of the magistracy, and had succeeded in establishing for himself a reputation far in excess of his actual worth. M. de Lamoignon had, during the last days of M. de Calonne's administration, taken the place of M. de Miromesnil. He had long cherished the hope of securing that important position, which was to bring him that of chancellor, as the advanced age of M. de Maupeou was liable to render this post vacant at any moment. He reckoned also on this windfall to once more establish on a good footing his fortune which was in a sad state, owing to a most imprudent use of it. This extravagance may well be taken as manifest proof of the decadence into which had fallen the spirit of the magistracy, once so jealous of the high esteem secured to it by the gravity of its manners and the regularity of its private life.

For instance, how is it to be conceived that Mlle. de Lamoignon could not reconcile herself to having married the sole inheritor of the name of d'Aguesseau, because this alliance did not give her the opportunity of being presented at Court? It was but too true that M. de Lamoignon would never withhold his support from any measures tending to render secure for him a post which he could not relinquish without falling into an abyss. Hence he devoted all his forces to the support of the archbishop, whom he gave to understand that he could rely upon him to conquer, in case of need, all parliamentary opposition, and, in particular that of the Paris Parlement, where he believed he had a powerful following at his back.

M. de Brienne, full of faith in this pledge, after having provided for immediate requirements by the creation of annuities to the extent of 60,000,000 livres, got rid of the Assembly of Notables. Then, in order to meet his engagements, as well as the ever-increasing calls for funds, he seized upon all M. de Calonne's plans, and drew up the edicts which he shortly afterwards laid before the Paris Parlement.

No difficulties were encountered as regards the foundation of the provincial assemblies, and a decree granting free trade in the matter of cereals; but the Stamp Acts and the question of a territorial subvention were not so easily disposed of. Then did the all-powerful opposition of the Paris Parlement make itself felt. I had been a member of that assembly for seven months, and I saw in that opposition the beginnings of the series of facts which were to lead us without interruption to the Revolution of 1789.

I do not intend to follow step by step the progress of the disputes which arose at that time between the Court and the magistracy. I do not wish to tell over again that which is to be found in all the Memoirs of the time, and which is set forth in a special and most detailed fashion in the work of M. Sallier, like myself a former councillor in the Parlement. I will merely present on this subject a few summarized views which I think will prove of assistance to a better understanding of events in their whole.

The Paris Parlement doubtless showed temerity in its opposition, and especially in the means which it adopted to render it effectual. It yielded too easily to a craving for popularity, to which its natural importance should have rendered it indifferent. Not only did it refuse to register the taxes; it also declared itself forever incompetent to grant such registration, and in so doing committed the greatest of mistakes, by disposing of a future that did not belong to it.

It was more than imprudent to call for the States-General in a peremptory fashion, it was doing violence to royal authority, and, in conformity with the principles of the magistracy (I am here speaking the latter's language, and viewing the matter from within its ordinary spirit), the Parlement should never have allowed itself to countenance such violence. I am certainly not blind to the faults of this Parlement, of which I was a member; but, in thus openly confessing them, I may claim the right of being no less sincere with regard to those of the Court. I say the Court advisedly, because that is where the seat of government really was in those days. How many blunders, what incapacity did its conduct not reveal! M. de Calonne took the initiative of all innovations, set the pace, and then refused to follow the movement to which it has given birth. Yet this was the sole way to direct it. Instead of calling diplomacy to his aid, he has recourse to force, while of all the springs which he handles, precisely those fail him on which he ought to have been able to place the greatest dependence.

In the very first days, the Parlement escapes his control, especially and almost solely because it is at one and the same time a House of Peers.

To render this situation wholly intelligible, I must enter upon a few details regarding the composition and the internal economy of the Parlement in those days.

The head of that body, which was styled the high chamber, did not have within itself any talent out of the ordinary, and not one of its members was held in high esteem. Its exile in 1771 had hastened the end, or had brought about the withdrawal of many old magistrates. Since then, men had entered the chamber between the ages of forty and fifty, instead of from fifty to sixty as formerly. The *grand banc*, that is the bench set apart for the *présidents*

*à mortier*, was still occupied by men bearing the great names of the magistracy, who set the example of a virtuous and respected life; but among them no man of prominent worth was to be found, and especially no gifted speaker, except, perhaps, M. de Saint-Fargeau. Yet, whether owing to indolence, from fear of committing himself, or from still other motives, which the termination of his career explains, M. de Fargeau hardly ever put that talent to any use.

The First President was M. d'Aligre, a man of parts, a good enough judge, but whose authority had been lessened by his passion for increasing his fortune. Owing to these several reasons, the *grand' chambre*, and the magistrates forming part of it, did not obtain from the rest of the House the recognition which should have been theirs.

Youth had shaken off the yoke of its elders. Abandoned to itself, in love with the new ideas, it had in its midst a few fairly gifted men, several of whom might even be considered good speakers, but who were almost to a man dominated by the impetuosity of their imaginations. Not having any other mentors, is it to be wondered at that this youth should have been carried away by the seductive examples cast in its path by the greatest names of France, the La Rochefoucaulds, the d'Harcourts, the Luynes, the d'Aumonts, the Luxembourgs, the Praslins, and so many more? A peculiarity well worthy of notice in the constitution of that epoch consists in the various elements composing the Paris Parlement, as far as the *Cour des pairs* is concerned. Out of one hundred and fifty magistrates, one half at most belonged to families consecrated for years gone by to the higher functions of the magistracy; the other half owed its somewhat recent origin to magistrates of secondary rank, and to men drawn from the high financial circles. All were called upon, in the sittings of the House, to share the functions of men invested with the highest dignities of the state.

In a debate, the vote of the least of the *conseillers d'enquête* counted as much as that of the oldest *duc et pair*, as that even of a prince of the blood, for the princes of the blood had a seat in the *Cour des pairs*. Such an arrangement, under a monarchy, was undoubtedly the most popular or the most liberal, to use the language of to-day, that could be conceived.

Nevertheless, this apparent liberality could, and was, oftentimes turned to good account on behalf of the royal power, as the influence of the princes of the blood and of the *ducs et pairs* could not help making itself strongly felt in a body so organized, and was as a matter of course exerted in favor of the Crown. Was it perchance cast against the Crown, the danger, it is true, became all the greater; but, when this occurred, was not the government always to blame for it? Its incapacity in that respect was manifested more than once during the course of the eighteenth century. For fifty years past one had witnessed the sight of *ducs et pairs*, of princes of the blood even, taking part in wretched disputes engendered almost in every case by false measures, and sometimes even by religious persecutions. In this direction, the quarrels arising out of Jansenism and Molinism were of a serious kind; for they, more than anything else, fostered the spirit of resistance, and accustomed the public mind to it during the reign of Louis XV. The unfortunate Louis XVI. was to succeed to this deplorable inheritance.

In 1787, nearly all those who were of some prominence in the peerage, nearly all those who with the magnificence of that high rank combined a cultured and distinguished mind, joined the ranks of the parliamentary opposition. I cannot forget how powerfully the minds of the young magistrates were affected by the attraction of following such leaders. They found themselves of a sudden bound up by party ties



in these great names, in these noble lives. Now everybody knows how party spirit serves to bring together and even to fuse social conditions. Heads were quickly turned by this seductive and novel intimacy; it took little to win us over; a kind word, a graceful show of setting value on our opinion, soon settled all difficulties; then, when we returned to our homes, our minds were still exercised over the remembrance of all that had taken place during the sittings of the Chamber. At the close of the sittings, some twenty of us were in the habit of dining together, most frequently at the table of our colleague, M. de Trudaine, whose head was to fall on the scaffold.

Those who were more clever, or who had more advanced ideas than the others, took care to fan the flames of our effervescence. Thus, it was at one of those dinners, at which M. d'Épéménil was present, that the Abbé Sabattier, who was somewhat intimate with the Duc d'Orléans, for the first time breathed the word States-General. The word surprised us at the outset, but it soon became current. When repeated a few days later at a sitting of the Chamber, it met with divided favor; but perhaps there was no *banc* where it caused less astonishment than on that of the Peers. The wise heads of the *grand' chambre* were thrown into a state of perturbation by it. I cannot forget the words of one of those old magistrates, who, on passing behind my bench, and noticing that I was somewhat excited, stopped and said: "Young man, a similar idea was frequently broached in the days of your grandfather, and this is what he then always told us: 'Gentlemen, this is no child's play; whenever France sees the States-General for the first time, she will also witness a terrible revolution.'" This and many other warnings which were given to us by men whose opinions were entitled to some weight, had the effect of causing a goodly number of us to hesitate. The majority



were led astray by the false move of a man of talent who, on that day, began the series of blunders he has since committed. That man was M. Ferrand. He was a ready speaker, was held in high regard, and possessed influence; it was he who ordinarily drew up the remonstrances. In order to get rid of the convocation of the States-General, he hit upon the plan of showing how the power of the Parlement would necessarily be lessened by that of the States-General.

This idea, which might have had some weight with a few calm and thoughtful minds, if, taking them aside, he had presented it to them in an adroit fashion, produced on the assembly as a mass an effect altogether contrary to that which he had looked forward to. From the moment that our interests were clearly at stake, we could see nothing finer than to sacrifice them to what we looked upon as the public weal. Our feelings of generosity got the better of us, and there was no way of holding us back. On that day did I begin a course of experience with large assemblies. I was struck by what had just happened, and I was often to bear it in mind in the future.

So the Parlement called the States-General, and declared itself incompetent to vote any taxation. Its removal to Troyes is a matter of history, as well as its return to Paris, after having formed a regular coalition against all the other Parlements of France.

Two months later, the ministry renewed the struggle. At a time when it had derived so much benefit from adopting a conciliatory policy, it saw fit, without a shadow of necessity, and when it was least to be expected, to have recourse to force and to coercion. Without previous warning, immediately after the vacation, when the members of the Parlement had hardly had time to meet, it prevailed upon the king to hold a royal sitting, at which were sub-

mitted two edicts of the highest importance, the one governing the civil status of Protestants, and the other providing for the issuing of a series of loans covering a space of five years. These loans formed a grand total of 420,000,000 livres. The last-mentioned measure was certainly of the boldest. Its adoption would have presupposed absolute confidence in the government, and this confidence could only be established by a previous submitting of a financial scheme conceived in the most clever fashion, and for the carrying out of which perfect guarantees would be presented.

It was apparently with the object of inspiring confidence on this score that the edict — and herein lay another piece of imprudence — embodied the promise of calling the States-General together ere the five years would have expired. The bait was too clumsily set and did not deceive anybody. The king having allowed each one to freely express his opinion, the edict met with strong opposition, but no division took place on the question. Many have thought that if it had been put to vote, it would have received a majority. Such, however, is not my opinion. And so, after a debate, in appearance unrestrained, the chancellor declared, by order of the king, the registration of the loans, in the same way as if a *lit de justice* had been held.

Then it was that the Duc d'Orléans, protesting against such coercion, asked that a note should be made on the register to the effect that the measure had been passed by the *most express* order of His Majesty. Such was his first open act of opposition, and it was one of the most serious import. Never had a government played so well into the hands of its opponents.

This declaration of hostilities had great results outside, while it considerably angered the Court circle. Next day, the Duc d'Orléans was exiled to Villers-Cotterets, and in

order that nothing should be lacking to inflame the public, two of the Parlement's councillors, Messieurs Sabattier and Fréteau were carried off and imprisoned in fortresses. Their only offence consisted in having availed themselves of the permission granted by the king of freely expressing their opinion in his presence. I was present at this royal sitting, and it is hardly necessary to dwell upon the deep impression it left with me, and how indignant I felt over its results. If I obtrude my impressions and feelings on this occasion, it is for the reason that, as at that time I had no settled political convictions, it is reasonable to infer that what I felt must have been felt no less strongly by the mass of the people.

Nevertheless, I cannot hide from myself that my young mind was greatly shaken by the talent of our brilliant speakers, and that I was specially intoxicated with that of M. d'Épéménil. He had surpassed himself during the royal sitting, and had only escaped the outrageous treatment which had befallen his two colleagues, owing to the impression which he had made upon the king himself. Another member of the Parlement was, with him, saved from the ministerial vengeance by the personal will of the king. This was M. Robert de Saint-Vincent. This fact is worthy of record, because it affords one more proof of the good faith of Louis XVI. M. de Saint-Vincent had spoken with more vehemence than any one, but his speech was couched in a familiar and even trivial style, and the king thought he had discerned in it a character of loyalty and of out-spokenness which he could not find trace of in the honeyed utterances of M. Fréteau, and in the witty sentences of the Abbé Sabattier. The latter was, moreover, reputed to be one of the secret advisers of the Duc d'Orléans.

The king himself defended M. de Saint-Vincent against his ministers, to whose tender mercies he abandoned the

two others. That unfortunate monarch had shown to little advantage in this parliamentary drama. His uneasiness during the speech of M. d'Épréménil had only served to demonstrate that he lacked courage to follow his own impressions, and, at the moment when the Duc d'Orléans made his protest heard, he had hardly been able to utter a few words to say that such was his will, and that hardly in royal tones.

It became evident that the convocation of the States-General, within a short time, was inevitable.

If, therefore, the government had been endowed with the slightest foresight, it would have merely contented itself with the means of bringing about this convocation without too much jarring, and preserving sufficient power to be able to weather the storms which this event might bring about. M. d'Épréménil had, during the royal sitting, made a proposition, which was with the foregoing object in view, the best the Parlement could offer. He was in favor of granting the registration of the loans for the first two years, but on condition that the king would promise formally to call together the States in 1789. It was that proposition which had shaken the king's mind. His ministers had noticed it, and to the fear they experienced over it may perhaps be attributed the eagerness with which they drove His Majesty to measures which left no further chances open for negotiations.

The war between Parlement and Court went on during the end of 1787 and the first months of 1788. This war was waged on the Parlement's side with a moderation of manner and of speech which tended greatly to heighten the advantage of the position it took in the eyes of the public. Its personal quarrel did not prevent it from fulfilling its duty towards the state, the monarch, and individuals, and it did not once more fall into the mistake it had committed

on former occasions of suspending the administration of justice. Far from this being the case, the Parlement showed an increased activity in order to meet all the demands made upon it. After the royal sitting, it took up the edict on the civil status of Protestants, and accomplished its duty with a wisdom worthy of praise. Certain changes in the wording of the edict having been found necessary, M. de Malesherbes, the father of the edict, promptly endorsed the request for them in the King's Council, and the edict was registered on an almost unanimous vote.

This fact is really deserving of attention, the Paris Parlement being perhaps at that time the assemblage of men among whom religious principles held sway more than elsewhere, and among whom the greatest attachment to the faith of our fathers was to be found. Profound knowledge went together with these principles, and this makes it all the more cause for regret that so priceless an advantage should so soon have been disdained and rendered of no value.

The setting at liberty and the return to the Parlement of the kidnapped ministers was asked for unceasingly. The king's answers, as inspired by his ministers, were not only always couched in the sense of a refusal, but even in very dry form. As a result, instead of an isolated matter being debated, general questions were taken up. Remonstrances were drawn up in the matter of compulsory registrations, *lettres de cachet*, and the danger resulting from a power which should be kept within bounds by its sole will. These remonstrances, ever respectfully couched, nevertheless set forth strong arguments in their support. Hence they acted powerfully on the mind of the nation, and then it was that the Parlement enjoyed in the highest degree public esteem and popular favor. At an earlier date, when the seat of this assemblage had been transferred to Troyes,



riotous demonstrations had occurred on the Pont-Neuf and in the environs of Paris. In March and April, 1788, the inner halls of the Palais became the scene of demonstrations all the more dangerous that they did not have their origin with the populace. It was no longer the *basoche* alone, *i.e.* the young lawyers and *procureurs'* clerks, but truly the educated and best trained youth of the capital who surrounded the locality wherein were held the meetings of the Chamber, and who cheered the magistrates, whenever they declared themselves in a more pronounced fashion for the opinions most in favor for the time being.

I must fain confess that many of us were very grateful, nay, more so than was proper, for these marks of approval, and that some of us did not even stop at provoking them by means of communications that were indiscreet, to say the least of them. As a result of this, whereas, in the hall wherein the sittings were held, one heard only a language of independence contained within the limits of a decorum which no member of the assemblage would have dared to overstep, it was quite a different matter in the surrounding halls, and notably in that of the *Pas perdue*.

There, the speechifying and the talk were more than daring; they were seditious. However far I was carried away in those agitated days, it was nevertheless difficult for me not to entertain considerable anxiety with regard to the consequences of what I witnessed. What I had read about Cardinal de Retz would recur to me, and I could readily perceive that our mode of acting resembled too closely that of the *Fronde*.

One day in particular, having been struck more than usually with this similarity, I was on the point of saying so in the midst of the sitting of the Chamber, at the moment, when, according to usage, the clerk of the House called out my name, so that I should announce my opinion. I lacked



the necessary courage, and I contented myself, as usual, with being of the same opinion as Mr. So and So or the other. Had I yielded to my impulse, I should have created no little scandal, yet the result of my temerity would have been to show that I, while yet a very young man, had enjoyed an amount of foresight lacking only in too many others whom it suited better than me.

Yet, I must do my colleagues the justice of saying that not one of them, even among those most carried away, would not have thought of the *Fronde* without expressing a mortal fright. The purity of our intentions gave us a feeling of security; moreover, we placed in progress that silly confidence which was destined to deceive so many of us; and lastly, it must be confessed, we were very giddy, and somewhat thoughtless. Ours was the inexperience sprung from a prolonged vacation; ours was the thoughtlessness born of a craving for the enjoyments of life, from which the most serious matters were powerless to turn us; our mornings were spent in the Chamber, our evenings at the *bal de l'Opéra*.

True it is that the youngest of us would there meet the most sedate, the most august personages. One evening I was approached by a masked person of great wit, who took a pleasure in pointing out to me in piquant fashion the points of resemblance between the pleasures of the ball and those of the sitting of the Chamber at which he had seen me in the morning. This masked person was no other than Monsieur, who was to be Louis XVIII. When, in 1815, I had the honor of being one of his ministers, he enjoyed recalling the incident to my mind, a proof, among numerous others, that His Majesty was in possession of one of the most tenacious memories in his kingdom.

From day to day did the government embark upon a sea of fresh troubles. No longer could one remain blind to the

impossibility of realizing the succeeding loans the registration of which had so unfortunately been imposed at the royal sitting. This source of income must of necessity be abandoned. The tax of the *vingtième*, provided for at Troyes, was collected in the provinces with the greatest difficulty. The other Parlements, noticing the small amount of success the complaisance of the Paris Parlement had reaped, sought to throw every possible obstacle in the way of that collection, several of them going so far as to refuse the registration of the edict authorizing it.

There had been a series of removals and banishments, and of summonings to Versailles. Then it was that, upon the magistrates hurling the word despotism at the king's ministers, the latter answered with the word aristocracy. Nay, the word was embodied in an answer from royalty itself. Thus did there originate from the king's very lips the charge so often repeated by the revolutionary echoes. Still, it was not by indulging in such recrimination that the government could get out of the untenable position in which it had gotten itself; remedies more drastic were necessary.

They got no further in that respect than the celebrated project of creating the *Cour plénière*. M. de Lamoignon, had, alone, not been able to plan the carrying out of this conception. He had called upon several assistants (the Abbé Maury was one), a few of whom showed apparently but little discretion. The plans became known. On the 3d of May, 1788, the Paris Parlement, at a sitting at which the *Pairs* were present, issued a decree, wherein, after reciting the fundamental points of the monarchical constitution of France, it revealed to the nation what was being hatched in the King's Council against public rights, and protesting beforehand against everything that should be done. It may be said of this document, which was most

cleverly devised, that it strangled the *Cour plénière* even ere its birth. Those who had drawn it up had had cognizance of the edicts which had been prepared.

No sooner had the foregoing decree come to the knowledge of the ministers than it aroused their ire, and they immediately resolved upon casting into prison M. d'Épréménil, who was looked upon as its principal author. With him was coupled, it would be hard to say why, M. Goislard de Monsabert, against whom there was no other grievance than that he had, a few days before, denounced before a sitting of the Chamber, a certain act of extortion committed by the exchequer with regard to the collection of the *vingtièmes*. This gave the ministerial vengeance a childish character, and it became to the last degree odious when Messieurs d'Épréménil and Goislard having, to escape arrest, taken refuge in the *grand' chambre* of the *Palais*, were forcibly taken from the very midst of the assembly of the Chamber by an officer of the *gardes* bearing orders from the king.

This abduction, the investing of the *Palais* which had preceded it, the incidents of this so to speak siege, which lasted some twenty-four hours, drew upon the heads of those who had not feared having recourse to such means, both hatred and contempt. It is hard to understand how, on the point of dissolving the *Parlement*, the ministry had not felt that it should abstain from a vengeance henceforward without object, and which could only increase the predicament of its situation. Messieurs d'Épréménil and Goislard had been on the point of flying by the subterraneous passages of the *Palais*, which opened on the river. I saw them in their disguise, but at the moment at which they were preparing to carry out their escape, they were well enough advised to abandon the idea. They were taken, the one to Saint-Michel, the other to the isles of Hyères.

On the 8th of May was held at Versailles the *lit de*

*justice*, at which we read and promulgated, to the number of six, the laws which did away with the old magistracy, to place in their stead the *grands bailliages*, which were to render all forms of justice, and the *Cour plénière*, which was to take the place of the Parlement with regard to the framing and recording of laws. In order that there should be no lack of giving offence in bringing about these reforms, the wrong was committed of giving to this act of royal almightiness, the form of a private vengeance.

The king's speech began with these words: "Gentlemen, there are no faults which my Parlement has not committed during the past year." It was, therefore, to punish the Paris Parlement, or, to speak more truly, a few of its members of whom it was thought there was reason to complain, that was compassed the destruction of that French magistracy, so worthy of respect, which had rendered such great services to the state, and whose roots were entwined with the foundations of the monarchy? And the man who was the principal author of that portentous measure was a descendant of the illustrious house of Lamoignon, which derived all its lustre from the Paris Parlement!

In spite of so many errors, the *lit de justice* was not disturbed by any act which might denote the slightest resistance to the royal will. The reading of the king's will was listened to with the most respectful silence. I witnessed the scene, which made all the greater impression on me, for the reason that during the whole of the time it lasted, one might have thought oneself transported into the midst of one of the Court festivities.

There was scarcely any place in the throne-room for the members of the Parlement, so great was the number of ladies who, in all the brilliancy of their finery, set off all sides of the room. Hardly was the ceremony over, when the vexations of the ministers began.

The members of the *grand' chambre*, who were to become a part of the *Cour plénière*, and who had been ordered to remain at Versailles, wrote to the king, to assure His Majesty that it was impossible for them to assume the new duties assigned to them.

On returning to Paris, the councillors of the other Chambers sought to meet at the Palace, but it was guarded by soldiery. After having met at the residences of the *doyens*, they all wrote to the Keeper of the Seal, protesting individually against what had happened at the *lit de justice*.

At first, the ministers believed, or deluded themselves into believing, in order to persuade the king of it, that this resistance was a mere matter of form, and that it would die a natural death. If this delusion was sincere, it must have been of short duration, for, in a short time, it became impossible for them to remain ignorant of the fact that the demeanor of the magistracy had been the same throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom, and that in several large towns, the king's commissioners, intrusted with bringing down the edicts for registration, had been spat upon, and sometimes even ill-used. With but few exceptions, the inferior magisterial bodies followed the Parlement's lead. The *Châtelet de Paris* was the most important of these bodies, and upon no other's support had the Keeper of the Seal counted so much. It was the one which declared itself against him in the most uncompromising manner.

In addition to the natural feelings which dictated this resistance, an important lesson had been read at the very outset of the reign of Louis XVI., and its ever-present memory had sufficient power to maintain the courage of the weakest. In spite of its four years' existence, the death of the Maupeou Parlement was, at the time, hailed with delight, and the return to power of the one so severely



proscribed in the preceding years, was saluted with cheers. All the men composing it had, moreover, severely expiated their mistaken obsequiousness toward those at the helm of state, for, although twenty years had gone by since that event had happened, public opinion still seemed to pursue them with relentless animadversion. Now the work of M. de Brienne and of M. de Lamoignon was assuredly not of a nature to inspire greater confidence than that of M. de Maupeou, and it could not be denied that the cause of the Parlements, in 1788, was popular in a quite higher degree than in 1771.

The Assembly of the Clergy united in a protest with the nobility. It was in Brittany and in the Dauphiné that the nobility gave voice to its sentiments with the greatest force. The example given by the *gentilshommes* of these provinces was no less vigorously followed by those of Burgundy, Franche-Comté, the Languedoc, and the Béarn.

In vain did the king's commissioners and the military commanders make a display in the provinces of all the powers placed at their disposal; in vain did *lettres de cachet* rain upon the most recalcitrant; resistance went on increasing from all quarters. In order to restore peace to the public mind, the only resource left to the government was to renew its pledge to call together the so ardently prayed-for States-General.

On the 15th of July, the ministers made public an edict in which they announced the convocation of the States-General for the following month of May. They called upon all bodies, as well as upon all individuals, to express their ideas as to the best way of composing, of constituting them. This was a useless display of weakness. A month had hardly gone by, from the day of the publication of that edict, when the ministry, shorn of power and of consideration, had to abandon the reins of government.



The new order of judicature had failed to become an accomplished fact.

The dearth of funds in the Treasury had reached a point which precluded meeting any obligations, or of making any outlay on behalf of the public service, and it had become necessary to suspend many payments. As a prelude to all the ills which were to overwhelm France, a fearful hail-storm had devastated the most productive provinces. A fund was opened to meet the most pressing needs, but the little money produced from it was quickly spent. M. de Brienne had not feared to violate so sacred a trust. He had to be sacrificed to public indignation, and his dismissal was decided upon at the end of August. He went his way, loaded the while with honors, dignities, with the promise of a cardinal's hat, and in the enjoyment of the richest benefices.

M. de Brienne's place could not be taken by any other than M. Necker, whose personal credit had become indispensable in order to meet the most pressing needs. M. Necker was therefore called, and this, in the face of the king's repugnance to him.

In vain did M. de Lamoignon make an effort to retain his post in the new administration. He had to fall with M. de Brienne, with whom he had shared all responsibility, and he too withdrew from public life, bending under the load of royal favors. He was promised a duchy for his eldest son, while, in addition to the usual retiring pension, a sum of 400,000 francs was granted to him by way of gratuity. That amount was all that the Royal Treasury could at the moment dispose of. He demanded that one-half of it should be paid down to him. This relief was not sufficient to cover his debts; in despair he committed suicide in the grounds of Basville.

The return of M. Necker at the head of affairs, under

circumstances so critical, was a veritable triumph. That of the Parlement was no less brilliant. It was signalized by bonfires, illuminations, in a word, by every sort of a display of popular rejoicing, which, in some places, bore too close a resemblance to the outbursts of a victorious faction.

The foregoing ministry had been imprudent enough to declare, as shown previously, that there was no regular form for the convocation, composition, and constitution of the States-General. It had called upon the whole of France to express its opinion on that important matter.

The all-important question of the proportion in which the three orders were to be represented took precedence over all others. *What is the Third Estate?* asked the Abbé Sieyès in a pamphlet which made a deep impression at the time. After reading it, one discovered that the Third Estate meant *everything*, or pretty nearly so. Did M. Sieyès himself have the slightest glimpse of all that his pamphlet implied? This may be doubted, when, so shortly afterwards, he was to be seen taking up in so trenchant a fashion the defence of the clergy's possessions. He had, nevertheless, put his finger on the sore part of the social system, and touched upon the great question of the age, both in France and beyond its boundaries.

In the midst of all this effervescence, the Paris Parlement thought that it belonged to it to determine the rules to be followed. It rendered a decree stating that the methods followed for the calling together of the States in 1614, the last that had met, were still those which should prevail, if one did not wish to run to innovations, the consequences of which were not to be foreseen.

This decision, unfortunately for the Parlement, was not in accord with the most general sentiment of the country, nor especially with that of the leading minister, M. Necker,

who called the notables previously brought together by M. de Calonne, and made the announcement by means of a royal edict, that it was the intention of His Majesty to consult them on this important point.

This led immediately to a struggle between the Parlement and the ministry, of quite a different nature from those of the preceding years. The result was to give men who were better equipped the opportunity they had been waiting for to destroy an influence, the direction of which they fully saw would not become theirs. The effect of their manœuvres was so rapid, that before the end of 1788, it was, generally speaking, a well-established fact that the Parlement was retracing its steps, that it was abandoning the interests of the nation, and that it no longer desired the calling of the States-General.

The truth of this charge lay in the fact that the Parlement, left again to itself, felt the foreboding of a revolution, and did not wish it to be believed that it was going to give it any help. I have a perfect recollection of the discussions which took place in this connection. They presented an entirely novel aspect. No longer was there any excitement, any enthusiasm, any attempted or marked eloquence. Men reasoned coldly, and it seemed as if a veil of sombre hue had been spread over the assembly. Its importance was wiped out, no one gave it a thought, nobody was any longer under its spell. The States-General loomed up in too near a future for people's thoughts to turn to anything else.

I took part in the opening of the States-General, and, in spite of the pomp with which the royal power was still surrounded, I there saw the passing away of the old régime.

The régime which preceded '89, should, it seems to me, be considered from a twofold aspect: the one, the general condition of the country, and the other, the relations exist-

ing between the government and the country. With regard to the former, I firmly believe that, from the earliest days of the monarchy, France had at no period been happier than she was then. She had not felt the effects of any great misfortune since the crash which followed Law's system. The long lasting ministry of Cardinal de Fleury, doubtless inglorious, but wise and circumspect, had made good the losses and lightened the burdens imposed at the end of the reign of Louis XV. If, since that time, several wars, undertaken with little skill, and waged with still less, had compromised the honor of her arms and the reputation of her government; if they had even thrown her finances into a somewhat alarming taste of disorder, it is but fair to say that the confusion resulting therefrom had merely affected the fortune of a few creditors, and had not tapped the sources of public prosperity; on the contrary, what is styled the public administration had made constant progress. If, on the one hand, the state had not been able to boast of any great ministers, on the other, the provinces could show many highly enlightened and clever *intendants*.

Roads had been opened connecting numerous points, and had been greatly improved in all directions. It should not be forgotten that these benefits are principally due to the reign of Louis XV. Their most important result had been a progressive improvement in the condition of agriculture.

The reign of Louis XVI. had continued favoring this wise policy, which had not been interrupted by the maritime war undertaken on behalf of American independence. Many cotton-mills had sprung up, while considerable progress had been made in the manufacture of printed cotton fabrics, and of steel, and in the preparing of skins.

The progress made in the natural sciences, and the several branches of mathematics, came greatly to the aid of these. Chemistry was already giving people a glimpse of the assis-

tance it was very shortly to render to all useful arts. Men like Lavoisier, Berthollet, Fourcroy, and their pupils, were entering upon their career with giant strides. The Revolution took Lavoisier's life, but the training of his fellow-workers who survived him, and who did good service like his own, took place during the reign of Louis XVI., to which they belonged. Great attention was paid to their labor by this monarch, who also encouraged agriculture by every means at his command. The importation of merino sheep, that precious breed which has done so much to bring wealth to the farmer and to the manufacturer of woollens, must be placed to his credit. He had established model farms, thus placing at the disposal of agriculturists the resources of theory, and facilities for their application. Large edifices were being erected in Paris, while considerable building was taking place in the villages. Foreigners flocked to the capital where reigned a display of elegance which has never been surpassed.

I saw the splendors of the Empire. Since the Restoration I see daily new fortunes spring up and consolidate themselves; still, nothing so far has, in my eyes, equalled the splendor of Paris during the years which elapsed between 1783 and 1789. Magnificent residences stood then in the Marais quarter and in the île Saint-Louis. What is the Faubourg Saint-Germain of to-day compared with the Faubourg Saint-Germain of that period? And then, with regard to outdoor luxury, for those who can remember a field-day, or a race-day at Longchamps, or merely the appearance of the boulevard, did not the stream of equipages with two, four, or six horses, all vying in magnificence, and closely packed together at these places of rendezvous, leave far behind the string of private or livery coaches, among which appear a few well-appointed turnouts, that are to be seen in the same localities nowadays?



Far be it from me to shut my eyes to the reality of the public prosperity which we are now enjoying. I am cognizant of the improvement in the condition of the country districts, and I am aware of the fact that all that rests on this solid foundation, even though its appearance may be somewhat more humble, is much to be preferred to a grander exterior that might hide a less assured solidity. I do not seek to disparage the present time—far from it. I am ready to admit the advantages which have accrued, in many respects, as the results of the Revolution; as, for instance, the partition of landed property, so often assailed, and which, so long as it does not go beyond certain limits, tends to increase wealth, by introducing into many families a well-being hitherto unknown to them. But, nevertheless, when I question my reason and my conscience as to the possible future of the France of 1789, if the Revolution had not burst, if the ten years of destruction to which it gave birth had not weighed heavily upon that beautiful country, if Santo Domingo, for instance, had continued pouring its treasures into it, if the successive betterments to which I have alluded had not been checked by great catastrophes, I am convinced that France, at the time I am writing, would be richer and stronger than she is to-day.

Unless I am mistaken, it is Rivarol who has said of nations in the situation which I have just depicted: *They are a prey to the malady of prosperity*. The idea could not find better expression. He did not finish his picture with showing, as he ought to have done, how that malady likewise invades governments in no less dangerous a fashion.

What was at that time France's form of government? It was no longer that of the ancient feudal monarchy, under which the throne, surrounded by its puissant vassals, kept the nation at a great distance from its steps; under which the power emanating from this throne impressed the popu-



lar masses, even the intervening classes, with a respect that verged on superstition; under which the sovereign might at times be exposed to the acts of rebellion of some of the more turbulent among these high vassals; under which such acts of rebellion might give birth to the *Ligue* and to the *Fronde*, but under which they ever ended with some treaty benefiting those who had shown themselves the most to be feared, the cost of such treaty coming as a matter of course out of the pockets of the nation and of the country.

Richelieu, and after him, Louis XIV., had got the upper hand of these disturbances, and had broken down these feudal potentates. The structure, of which they were the component parts, and which they helped to support, had been supplemented by one of pomp by a monarchy all for show, if one may employ such an expression, wherein the king alone had remained great and the cynosure of all eyes. Louis XIV., by fashioning it to his measure, had imparted to it something of his imposing air. In spite of the reverses at the end of his reign, in spite of the acts of littleness given by him to the public gaze during the closing years of his life, it cannot be said that this proud air had lost all its glamour at the time of his death.

The royal power, under the Regency, under Louis XV., and under Louis XVI., passed through so many weak or incapable hands; it was, moreover, subjected to so many intrigues of the Court and even of the boudoir, that, as a result, there was a considerable diminution of the prestige with which the supreme power can dispense less, under a monarchical government, than under any other.

It was the administration of the public departments which had produced a state of prosperity; but it was, on the other hand, the government which had given birth to the Revolution under which it was to fall, and yet this government was neither a hard nor a vexatious one. All

things connected with it, which were not *de jure* tempered by the laws, were so *de facto* by the usages and customs of the day. The right of property was respected; for the immense majority of Frenchmen there was almost complete individual liberty. Still, this liberty was not inviolate, since, in spite of repeated protests from the Parlement, the power of arrest, imprisonment, of exile, was exercised by means of *lettres de cachet*.

During the last years of the reign of Louis XV., the abuse of this power had been all the more frequent and outrageous, for the reason that it had been had recourse to, not only to obtain the triumph of such and such a religious opinion, of itself hardly worthy of attention, but also to gratify the hatred, the revenge, the caprices of one or the other of the sovereign's mistresses, perhaps even of the very ministers who had this terrible weapon at their disposal. This odious scandal had ended with Louis XV. At the accession of Louis XVI., M. de Malesherbes had been instrumental in opening prison doors to prisoners of State; and, during the course of his reign, up to 1787, the use of *lettres de cachet* had been moderate enough to be looked upon rather as the violation of a principle, and an insult to justice, than as any real injury to society. Moreover, the *lettres de cachet* were, for the most part, hardly ever called into use except at the urgent request of families desirous of putting a stop to the follies of some of their members. The famed Mirabeau had been imprisoned at Vincennes at the request of his father.

Still, one cannot help recording a revolting abuse of this power to carry off and imprison citizens arbitrarily, which occurred in 1785. M. de Beaumarchais, while in the midst of the triumph of the performances of his *Figaro*, was having trouble with the *lieutenant de police* with regard to a preface which he wished to insert in a published

version of his play; he was also charged with having composed a song, sharply satirizing a charge of the Archbishop of Paris. He was arrested, and, by virtue of a *lettre de cachet*, imprisoned at Saint-Lazare.

The Paris Parlement had seen two of its members seized during one of its sittings, and immediately cast into prisons of the state, while several deputies from Brittany, who had come to Paris to lay at the foot of the throne certain demands of the body to which they belonged, had likewise been incarcerated in the Bastille.

It must be acknowledged that, with the exception of a few persons whose actions caused the government particular irritation, the rest of the citizens practically enjoyed the most complete liberty. One was free to speak, to write, to act with the greatest independence, and one could even defy the authorities in perfect security. *De jure* the press was not free, yet anything and everything was printed, and hawked about with audacity. The most sedate personages, the magistrates themselves, who ought to have curbed this licentiousness, actually encouraged it. Writings the most dangerous, and the most fatal to authority, were to be found in their possession. If, from time to time, some of the most zealous and conscientious of them denounced any flagrant case in the halls of the Parlement, their action was almost treated as ridiculous, and oftenest led to no result. Those who will not grant that this was liberty, must perforce admit that it was license.

The influence of the local authorities, in their daily relations with citizens, from which all of us have suffered so frequently for the last thirty years, was not perceptible, — it was unknown. What remained of the feudal power was hardly more than a word bereft of its meaning. It had become merged into that of the Crown.

There still remained certain pecuniary manorial rights ;

but they constituted a form of property as good as any other, and which could be held by a commoner as well as by one of noble birth. The power of the seigniors over the bodies of their vassals no longer had any existence except in fiction; about all that was left to the seigniors of the old feudal power, was the shadowy obligation to protect these same vassals.

At the time of his accession, Louis XVI. completely did away with anything that might still be found oppressive in the exercise of this power. Hence there was between the nobility and the other citizens, just as there was between those citizens and the clergy, but one question in dispute, that of pecuniary privileges, and of the one the two first orders enjoyed of not being taxed as was the third order, either in form or at fixed rates.

The influence of the clergy did not make itself felt any more heavily on the individual than did that of the nobility. The concessions just granted to Protestants, in the matter of their civil status, had met with no obstruction on the part of the ecclesiastical power. Nothing could illustrate better how tolerant it had become. The higher clergy became reconciled to the views known as the *light of the century*. With regard to the *curés* who came into actual contact with the people, they merely extended their paternal care of their flocks, which also absorbed the better part of their income.

Whence came then that passion for reform, that desire to change everything which made itself manifest at the close of the eighteenth century? It was due rather to a great stirring up of ideas than to actual sufferings; so much had been written about these ideas, they had been so greatly discussed, that doubt had been cast upon all things. The sovereign authority had been in a more particular manner broken in upon, and the Court of Louis XVI. had not known how to restore the waning prestige of royal majesty, even

in the matter of that exterior glamour, which oftentimes suffices to insure the obedience of the masses.

The Court, sceptical and corrupt, was composed of the descendants of the most noble families of France, but also, on the other hand, of parvenus, in whose case favor had stood in lieu of services. The arrogance of their pretensions was in universe ratio to their merit, and their insolent haughtiness had rendered them odious.

An idle life and the need of money was the source of many scandals; the Memoirs of the day are full of them; so I need not say any more on this score. Unfortunately, in a country like France, the Court cannot become corrupt by itself. For some time past the intercourse between Paris and the Court of Versailles had been too frequent, too intimate, for the example of the one over the other not to be all powerful.

Shall I speak of the many cases in which ruin was brought into families by the extravagant luxury which stalked about in public places? Were I to rush into anecdotal narrative, I should seem to be inditing a satire. It will be sufficient for me to say, that when I made my entry into the world of society, I was, so to speak, introduced in parallel fashion to the lawful spouses and the mistresses of my kinsmen and of my family's friends, spending Monday evening with one lady, Tuesday evening with the other, and I was but eighteen years old, and born of a family of the magistracy!

The irreligious, critical, and philosophical spirit, the inexplicable craze for all sorts of Utopian chimærae, the lowering of the moral standard, especially the loss of respect for institutions consecrated by time, and for old family traditions, all fostered the development of the passions which were soon and forever to sweep away the old French society, the *old régime*.



The convocation of the States-General was preceded in Paris, and then in other parts of the kingdom, by popular uprisings, the origin of which could be traced to the parliamentary quarrels. They had been for two years tolerated by the magistrates who ought to have suppressed them.

One of the most serious was that which took place in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine against a paper manufacturer named Réveillon, whose place of business was burnt down. This popular demonstration merits our attention, for it evidently served to get ready the means which shortly afterwards secured the triumph of the insurrections of the 14th of July. I saw it at close range; it came like a surprise to the Parisian world of fashion in the midst of the pleasures of a race which was taking place in the wood of Vincennes. As soon as the occurrence was known there everybody hastened back to Paris, taking good care to avoid the terrible faubourg. One of the young fellows, in whose company I was, determined to go through it.<sup>1</sup> Two or three of us resolved upon not letting him go alone. We were on horseback, and we came safely out of our foolhardy undertaking, owing to the fact that a like number of ragamuffins jumped up behind us. These strange companions brought us safely to the edge of the boulevard, where they left us. This uprising was evidently an artificial one; the poor wretches who took part in it knew neither what they wanted nor what they did, and it was clear that their fury was of the manufactured-to-order kind.

I was still going about the boulevards at five o'clock that evening, when two or three companies of the Swiss Guards and of the *gardes françaises* passed that way, marching

<sup>1</sup> This young man was M. d'Oilliamson, whose tragic end was remarkable from the fact that he was the last *émigré* shot in France for having left the country.



against the faubourg with three or four cannon and with lighted fuses. They soon quelled the disturbance. This was the first occasion on which a military force supported with cannon had been seen in our time in the streets of Paris. Such a display had a great effect. One hardly foresaw then to what an extent one was to get accustomed to it. It has been seen that the *gardes françaises* were still to be depended upon, but the sight of their loyalty became a warning to the party which was working to bring about the Revolution. It saw that the time had come to begin tampering with the spirit of that body, and the result is but too well known.

The States-General met, therefore, amid such fearful preliminaries, and everything led one to foresee serious troubles in no distant future. And, indeed, how could it be supposed that the very men, who had not been able to direct the public business with all the resources of an authority for so long a time undisputed, would be more fortunate or more skilful, in the presence of an assembly of twelve hundred members, in which the most opposite interests and ambitions were to join issue?

The only question upon which all were to agree was the necessity of overthrowing everything that was in existence. The first illusion to vanish was the one which had induced people to put faith in the influence exercised by Necker. I listened to the reading of a bulky memorandum, wherein he believed he had outlined for the States-General their course, and dictated the rules which were to govern them. Hardly had the sitting been adjourned, when the memorandum passed out of mind; no one referred to it.

## CHAPTER III

Councillor Pasquier at the taking of the Bastille, with Mlle. Contat, of the Comédie-Française — The theatre as the school of youth — The "première" of Beaumarchais's *Figaro* — Grétry's successes at the Opéra-Comique — The day following the 6th of October at the Tuileries; aspect presented by the king and queen — The public state of mind in 1789 — Royalist tendencies of the National Guard — The club de Valois — Grievous futility of the first emigration — The royal family's flight to Varennes — Fearful anxiety caused in Paris by the king's departure — M. de Saint-Fargeau's characteristics: his hatreds, his phlegm, his violence — Final dissolution of the Parlements — The new judiciary order — A protest from the old magistracy — The death of the Constituent Assembly — Decrees against the *émigrés*, against the priests — The pillage of the grocers' shops in Paris — The first appearance of the Phrygian cap.

I WAS present at the taking of the Bastille. What has been styled the *fight* was not serious, for there was absolutely no resistance shown. Within the hold's walls were neither provisions nor ammunition. It was not even necessary to invest it.

The regiment of *gardes françaises* which had led the attack, presented itself under the walls on the rue Saint-Antoine side, opposite the main entrance, which was barred by a drawbridge. There was a discharge of a few musket shots, to which no reply was made, and then four or five discharges from the cannon. It has been claimed that the latter broke the chains of the drawbridge. I did not notice this, and yet I was standing close to the point of attack. What I did see plainly was the action of the soldiers, *invalides*, or others, grouped on the platform of the high

tower, holding their muskets stock in air, and expressing by all means employed under similar circumstances their desire of surrendering.

The result of this so-called victory, which brought down so many favors on the heads of the so-called victors, is well-known. The truth is, that this great fight did not for a moment frighten the numerous spectators who had flocked to witness its result. Among them were many women of fashion, who, in order to be closer to the scene, had left their carriages some distance away.

I was leaning on the gate, which, on the place de la Bastille side, opened into the garden of Beaumarchais's house. On this gate he placed, a few days later, the following inscription: *This little garden was planted in the first year of liberty.* By my side stood Mlle. Contat, of the Comédie-Française. We stayed together till the very end, and then I gave her my arm back to her carriage, which had waited in the place Royale. The prettiest woman imaginable, Mlle. Contat united to the charms of her person, to her admirable talent, one of the most brilliant of minds. Mme. de Staël is the only one I have known who could rival her in flashes of ready wit.

Mme. de Coigny, who deservedly enjoyed fame in this respect, was certainly not her superior, and, I do not think, even her equal. I do not recollect how it came about, but there was a constant intercourse between them. They frequently corresponded with each other, and, when they met after the theatre, Mme. de Coigny never failed to seek Mlle. Contat, and to improve the opportunity by paying her a few pleasing compliments.

Her dressing-room at the Comédie-Française, which was furnished with the greatest taste, was always besieged by all the distinguished men in the house. The same happened in her *salon*, of a night. To mention some of the members

of the Court: M. de Narbonne, the Vicomte de Ségur, the Marquis de Chauvelin, M. de Lauzun, M. de Saint-Blancar, Archambaud de Périgord; among men of letters, the Abbé Delille, Chamfort, Beaumarchais, Collin d'Harleville, Vigée, Défaucherais.

As ever under like circumstances, the women were not of the same rank. Mlle. Raucourt, and the leading actresses of the Théâtre-Français, would come sometimes, and also the principal actors then in vogue: Molé, Fleury, d'Azincourt, and lastly Talma, up to the time when he deserted the Comédie-Française to join the Palais-Royal troupe.

Mlle. Contat made herself remarkable, in the midst of this brilliant circle, by a perfect ease and correctness of manner. Everything about her person was stamped with an incontestable superiority. When seeing her so thoroughly at home in the centre of this social circle, wherein were to be met so many people of prominence, I have often said to myself that there was no cause for wonderment at the exquisite naturalness and the piquant animation with which she impersonated Célimène.

The theatre held a great place in the social life of that period. The masterpieces of the French style were performed three times a week. Everybody that was anybody at Court or in society fought for seats. During the *entr'actes*, all met in the foyer. The habitués would indulge in the most excited discussions and criticisms; old traditions and new ideas had each their partisans; it was an excellent school for youth. I seldom missed a performance. In this way, while enjoying myself greatly, I went through a two years' course of theatrical literature.

I was present at the first performance of Beaumarchais's *Figaro*. Never was there a more brilliant one. The desire to witness it was so great that several ladies of the highest rank spent the previous night in the actresses' dressing-

rooms. The police had refused to license the production of the play; but this obstacle had been removed at the pressing request of the queen. The Court and the nobility were about to present their breast to the most cruel and terrible shafts of criticism.

The truth is, that the political portion of the work,—its consequences so serious for the future,—were, at the outset, what least attracted attention. People were bent on enjoyment. A perfect shower of wit, the play of the actors (never perhaps has such a combination of talents been seen together), the perfection of the staging, severally contributed to the unheard-of success which maintained itself for over a hundred performances.

At the Opéra-Comique, the success of the season was Grétry's. *Richard Cœur de lion* drew all Paris, and the romance of Blondel, "O Richard, ô mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne!" became shortly afterwards the song of the faithful servitors of a king more to be pitied than Richard, and more worthy than him of their love, of their pity, and of their devotion. But the time is fast approaching when this pleasurable life is to cease. It is about to be brutally crushed out by the Revolution, which is to sweep away forever not only political organization consecrated by centuries of glory, but a society whose manners, whose intellect, whose refinement had held such a sway over Europe.

The days of the month of October followed upon the taking of the Bastille, and the horrible scenes which had accompanied it.

Two days later, I was in the rue de Richelieu, which was filled with a seething mob. Not knowing what had brought this concourse of people together, and seeking to get away from it, I nearly fell down, through having stumbled on the body of M. Foulon, which lay in the gutter, and which I had not noticed. The horde which dragged this corpse

about during part of the day was merely enjoying a rest. Next day, I saw drive up the place de Grève the gig from which the hood had been torn off, and which contained the unfortunate Berthier, who, ten minutes later, had ceased to exist.

And lastly, when the king made his entry into his capital, I followed him from the city's gate to the dome of bayonets and drawn swords under which he ascended the steps of the Hôtel de Ville.

Chance led me to the opening of the States, with a young man whose name has become somewhat famous. This circumstance led to a certain amount of intercourse between us, which was in the future to be of some importance. He was the son of a rich merchant at Bordeaux; his name was Ducos. In 1791 he became a member of the Legislative Assembly, and subsequently one of the Convention. In 1789, he had been in Paris for a few months, after a long residence in Holland, during which he had had plenty of opportunity for watching the struggle which had ended in the triumph of the Orange party over the republicans.

He had strongly sympathized with the defeated party, and had imbibed its principles. I have known few men possessed of a more brilliant intellect, of so vivid an imagination, and yet of so amiable a character.

Following upon our first coming together, and owing to several bonds of union, we met pretty frequently during the months which elapsed between the opening of the Assembly and the 6th of October. The events which came under our notice during this interval made a somewhat similar impression on both of us. As the saying was then, they made more of an *aristocrat* of me, and in spite of Ducos's primary tendency, they almost did the same for him; but he soon left for Bordeaux, found there connections which brought him back to his first love, and he came back to Paris what was called a *patriot*.



The general impression left on my mind by the horrors of the 6th of October was strengthened by the one I had felt while performing a most melancholy duty. The day following that upon which the royal family were dragged captives to the Tuileries, the Parlement was, according to custom, called upon to go and present its respects to them. There were but few of the members of that body in Paris, and I was among the few of those whom the First President could bring together about his person. The traces of violence which met our eyes, the confusion existing in the palace, the cast-down and disheartened appearance of the household, the haughty and triumphant attitude of the individuals who, under the orders of M. de La Fayette, had captured the palace guards and through whose ranks we were compelled to wend our way, had but feebly prepared us for the heart-rending scene which awaited us as soon as we had been brought into the presence of our unfortunate sovereigns. It seemed that ten years had passed over their heads in the space of ten days.

The king's face bore the imprint of resignation. He understood that he had not reached the end of his misfortunes. Indignation shone through the queen's grief, which displayed somewhat more firmness. Her son was sitting in her lap, and in spite of the courage of which she had given so many heroic proofs during the past forty-eight hours, one could not but feel that that son was for her a safeguard to the protection of which she committed herself. When she received us, it was plainly to be read in her eyes that she clearly saw in ours to what an extent the sorrowful congratulations which we brought were in contradiction with the feelings of our innermost hearts, and how we suffered at having to speak those meaningless sentences, consecrated by usage in days of happiness, and at not being able to speak others.

The emotion which this scene filled me with was as deep as lasting. All that in my mind and heart attracted me to and inspired me with a taste for a wise and lawfully regulated liberty faded away in the presence of the painful spectacle which aroused my indignation. Each succeeding day, indeed, witnessed the increasing of disasters, spoliations, and crimes of all kinds. My sentiments were offended by the lack of respect shown to all that I had accustomed myself to hold in reverence. I was neither giddy enough to divest my mind of this spectacle, nor enough of a stoic to consider it as a necessary condition of the great destinies which awaited regenerated France.

God forbid, however, that I should refuse to recognize to-day the sincere and doubtless legitimate enthusiasm which had in those days taken hold of many upright minds and noble hearts. I must fain admit that that enthusiasm must have had a great sway, as, in '89, '90, and '91, the great majority of France undoubtedly testified to its adhesion to the Revolution by its sentiments, indications, and by its hopes.

The year 1789 witnessed the disappearance of the peacefulness of that social life which had so long been France's charm. Political feuds, angry discussions, and passions brought an element of disturbance into society, and were not long in dispersing the elements of it. The manners of the period would not be understood, if one did not take into account the important part played by the fair sex in sharing these emotions. Their empire over people generally made itself manifest through the shades of cockades, through their predominating tint. It was, above all, the uniform of the National Guard, the donning of it, or the refusal to do so, which was the most characteristic symptom of a man's opinion.

At the outset, the National Guard appeared to Royalists

as merely an instrument of insurrection. The Paris Guard had been taken to Versailles on the 6th of October by M. de La Fayette, and although one could not lay to its door the misdeeds of that dreadfully memorable night, for, on the contrary, it had checked their career, it nevertheless brought the king back to Paris in triumph,—such a triumph! Hence it shared the odium which its commander had incurred. Yet, such as I have found him since, I have no hesitation in saying that had the command of those soldiers fallen to any other than M. de La Fayette, who was never able to make anything out of them but an instrument of parade, the instrument of his vanity, who never knew how to put it to a practical use until the moment when he was about to abandon its command; that if, for instance, M. de Bouillé, or a man of his mould, had been at its head, there was a time when it would have turned affairs into another channel, and when it might even have rendered the king independent of the insubordination of his army.

I have had the opportunity of forming an opinion concerning that *garde*, although not a member of it. It was in the following way: I had an uncle, as worthy a man as ever breathed, and with no friendly feeling towards the Revolution. He was a postmaster, and had accepted the command of the battalions of his *quartier*, which was also mine. I am under the impression that M. d'Oigny, the Postmaster-General, had conveyed to him the king's order that he should take it. However this might be, he had come latterly to take pleasure in his command, and, as he dwelt in my family, the doors of our house were open to all officers of high rank in his battalion.

I was therefore constantly in the company of these gentlemen. We chatted together, had discussions, and even angry disputes. At first, they were wroth with me for declining to wear the grenadier's (private) busby, and for

even refusing to take command of a company; but we ended in being good friends none the less, and I must admit, that at the expiration of six months they were, with but a slight shade of difference, just as good Royalists as myself. They gave proof of it afterwards at all times, and most particularly on the 10th of August. As a result of this, the better part of them lost their heads on the scaffold during the Reign of Terror.

It remains to be pointed out that this battalion belonged to one of the most commercial *quartiers* of Paris, and that it represented perfectly the opinions of the *bourgeoisie* of that city. Nearly all the other battalions were, towards the end of 1790, of a like mind, and all, almost without exception, would have been in the same frame of mind, if, instead of continually turning the National Guard into ridicule, it had been openly taken up; if, for instance, the queen had been able to bring herself to show full faith in it.

In spite of my Royalist opinions, a certain amount of easy-going inherent to my character, which has never failed me, caused me to live in good enough harmony with a few men whose opinions did not harmonize with mine, in spite of the remonstrance which my conduct too often drew upon me from my family and friends. I was in the habit of meeting several of them at the club de Valois, the only one perhaps where a similarity of opinion was not a *sine qua non* for the purposes of admission. To this circumstance is it due that I studied a little more deeply both sides of the question, read continuously the journals of all shades of opinion, and thus I received, at that early date, a few lessons of toleration in politics, for I came to understand that a man of intellect, of honest feelings, and of respected character might view matters political in a different light from myself, without being for that a scoundrel, or a man fit only for the gibbet. From that very moment I also took

a dislike to the coarse and even insulting jokes which too often were the favorite pastime of us aristocrats. I could oftentimes see how unjust they were, and always feel the harm they did.

It must also be admitted, that while I was convinced that we were defending the good cause, I could not help recognizing that our adversaries managed their affairs much more cleverly than we did. A large number of us had come to the conclusion (I did not share their mistake) of believing that in order to reach the best, the worst had to be waded through. This mistaken notion governed the greater part of the Right, in the Constituent Assembly. I frequently attended its sittings, and but too often noticed the deplorable spectacle resulting therefrom. Everything, or nearly everything, was done by the party opposed to the Revolution in the excitement of the moment; nothing was the result of reasoning.

Who, for instance, reasoned out the emigration? It has oftentimes been asked how so extraordinary a resolution came to be taken; how it had entered the minds of men gifted with a certain amount of sense that there was any advantage to be derived from abandoning all the posts where they could still exercise power; of giving over to the enemy the regiments they commanded, the localities over which they had control; of delivering up completely to the teachings of the opposite party the peasantry, over whom, in a goodly number of provinces, a valuable influence might be exerted, and among whom they still had many friends; and all this, to return for the purpose of conquering, at the sword's point, positions, a number of which at least could be held without a fight.

No doubt it has been offered as an objection, that the peasantry set fire to châteaux, that soldiers mutinied against their officers. This was not the case at the time of



what has been called the first emigration, and, at any rate, such doings were not general; but does danger constitute sufficient cause for abandoning an important post? Nay, is it not even true that this very danger, which attained its highest point at the outset, was on the wane at the very moment when the emigration was at its height? What is the answer to all this? Merely what follows. The voluntary going into exile of nearly the whole nobility of France, of many magistrates who were never to unsheath a sword, and lastly, of a large number of women and children, — this resolve, without a precedent in history, was not conceived and determined upon as a State measure; chance brought it about. A few, in the first instance, followed the princes who had been obliged, on the 14th of July, to seek safety out of France, and others followed them.

At first, it was merely in the nature of a pleasant excursion. Outside of France, they might freely enjoy saying and believing anything and everything. Nothing prevented them from hurling anathemas at the Revolution, for in almost all directions were to be found people who gave utterance to like sentiments. The wealthiest were the first to incur the expense of this trip, and a few brilliant and amiable women of the Court circle did their share to render most attractive the sojourn in a number of foreign towns close to the frontier.

Gradually, the number of these small gatherings increased, and it was then that the idea arose of deriving advantage from them. It occurred to the minds of a few men in the *entourage* of the Comte d'Artois, and whose moving spirit was M. de Calonne, that it would be an easy matter for them to create a kingdom for their sovereign outside of France, and that if they could not in this fashion succeed in giving him provinces to reign over, he would at least reign over subjects, and that this would serve to



give him a standing in the eyes of foreign powers, and determine them to espouse his cause.

The women talked duty and honor to the men, threatened laggards with an undying ridicule, and derisively presented them with distaffs. They went so far as to imagine that they were followers of Saint Bernard, the preachers of a new crusade. But the crusaders of Saint Bernard's day sallied forth to conquer a foreign land, and did not go away to come back and conquer their own.

Thus, in '89, '90, and '91, there were a few who were compelled to fly from actual danger; a small number were led away by a genuine feeling of enthusiasm; many felt themselves bound to leave, owing to a point of honor which they obeyed without reasoning it out; the mass thought it was the fashion, and that it looked well; all, or almost all, were carried away by expectations encouraged by the wild-est of letters, and by the plotting of a few ambitious folk, who were under the impression that they were building up their fortunes. All these reasons acted upon this too confident mass so much to be pitied in the future. The greater part of it honorably, courageously, and resignedly endured its unhappy lot abroad; but its misfortunes nevertheless constantly pressed on France, and are to the present day the cause of its experiencing a sense of uneasiness, the effects of which will be felt for a long time.

The king blamed the conduct of his brothers in leaving France, in that they took with them so many persons upon the support of whose devotion he could have reckoned. He felt that their conduct increased the distrust of his enemies, and consequently the pressing dangers which threatened him. The emigration was doubtless repugnant to his rectitude and to his reason. But, did he ever possess sufficient strength to oppose it plainly?

The unfortunate ease with which he wavered in his reso-

lutions, the spirit of contradiction so frequently manifested in his words and his actions, was never better shown than on the occasion of his unfortunately conceived flight to Varennes. On leaving Paris, he had stated that he was no longer free, that he could no longer tolerate a situation so humiliating and so contrary to law, and two months later we see him giving his sanction to the Constitution, without having the courage to proclaim that this sanction, if he granted it, was of no value, unless at least an appearance of liberty were granted to him. He does not know sufficient to derive any advantage from a situation which would have considerably embarrassed his opponents.

I noticed, during the twenty-four hours which followed the flight of the royal family, the effect produced by this unexpected bit of news. At first, as no one entertained any doubt as to the successful result of the undertaking, the king was twelve hours in advance of any would-be pursuers. How could it be supposed that, whatever road he took, steps had not been taken to insure the success of his journey, whether, as was generally believed, he wished to cross the frontier, or whether he intended to establish his residence in some important town in the kingdom? In either case, the citizens of Paris considered their position a most critical one. They had always looked upon the presence of the king in their midst as a guarantee against the danger and the acts of vengeance which might threaten them.

Added to this feeling was the real attachment felt toward the king's person and his family by the National Guard. For the past two years, the National Guard had repeatedly enjoyed the honor of coming into contact with them, an honor of which every *bourgeois* of Paris still felt proud. Herein lay, therefore, many stumbling-blocks in the way of the men of the Revolution, and they hardly knew whom

they could depend upon, or place confidence in. The army was no less a source of anxiety to them. It would take so little to change the minds of the soldiers, who, upon seeing the king in the midst of them, might once more turn Royalists, nay, even rabid Royalists.<sup>1</sup>

I happened to dine that day with the President of the Assembly, M. de Beauharnais, and Messieurs de Barnave, Menou, Lameth, and lastly, M. de Saint-Fargeau. All of them had sought refuge in a very small room, adjacent to the club already spoken of. These gentlemen, freshly arrived from the Assembly, felt the need of breathing freely, and of divesting themselves for a while of the solemn part which they had been compelled to act up to as long as the sitting had lasted. They were not restrained either by my presence or by that of several other habitués with whom I was dining. Their conversation bore all the characteristics of absolute discouragement. They did not know which way to turn, and I saw plainly that they were completely in the dark as to the road taken by the king. Hence it is that I am convinced that M. de La Fayette, with whom they were all on terms of intimacy, was equally ignorant of it, and that all the surmises which have been indulged in on this score, rest upon no foundation whatever.

One man only among these gentlemen astonished me. It was M. de Saint-Fargeau, *président à mortier* and a member of the Paris Parlement. On that day he gave vent, for the

<sup>1</sup> An incident, the truth of which I can vouch for, shows what excellent grounds there were for this apprehension. The regiment of the *Couronne*, garrisoned at Lille, had, for some days, been in a state of mutiny toward its colonel, M. de Lameth, and had confined him to his quarters. He was the eldest of four brothers, and the only one who was an *aristocrat*. I have what follows from his own lips. The news reaches Lille that the king has left Paris, and that he is at Metz, and in command of its garrison. Three hours later, the regiment sends a deputation to its colonel entreating him to place himself at its head, and to lead it to Metz near the king's person, arguing that the regiment of the *Couronne* must necessarily be one of the first to afford him protection.

first time, to the feelings of hatred and violence which dwelt in his innermost heart. His outward appearance was cold, and stamped with the hereditary magisterial phlegm of his family. He had asserted himself but little at the sittings of the Assembly, and although he was a gifted speaker, I do not think I have heard him utter three consecutive sentences in the midst of that body. Upon becoming a member of the States-General, he had stayed, as long as the three orders had remained apart, in the ranks of the nobility, that is, opposed to a fusion of the three orders, and consequently to the alliance most necessary to the progress of the Revolution.

By degrees, but ever without opening his lips, he went over to the majority in the Constituent Assembly, in other words, to the bosom of the party which was making the Revolution, and voted constantly with them. But, beyond this assent, he did not actively interfere with matters, and would spend most of his evenings at the club, remaining silent on all political topics, wholly engrossed in losing considerable money at the game of billiards, and without being disturbed by it.

On that evening, he broke his silence for the first time, and upon Messieurs de Beauharnais and Menou admitting that they were to blame for the too great pressure that had been put upon the king, we were greatly surprised to hear him break out into the most vehement invectives against both king and queen. In vain did his colleagues try to calm him down, and to bring to his comprehension that the time for wisdom and moderation was at hand; their efforts were fruitless. He rose from table and left the dining-room with all the signs of a furious anger. Such was the man who later on, not only voted the death of Louis XVI. but who, through his zeal in securing votes to that end, contributed more than any other man towards compassing it. The

day after the scene which I have described, he resumed his phlegmatic appearance, and seemed to think of nothing but his game of billiards. So he remained until the 10th of August, 1792. From that date we never met again.

I have good grounds for coming to the conclusion, that, in spite of the bold front shown by the leaders of the Constituent Assembly, they were at least in a state of consternation. Everybody knows of the changed aspect of affairs on the following day.

The captivity of the king inspired a few faithful Royalists with the touching idea of offering hostages to take his place in jail. It was undoubtedly madness to imagine that such a proposition would be entertained; and yet, the greater number made it in entire good faith. I knew several of them, particularly one M. Bernard, President of the *Cour des aides*, a man sixty years of age, and who enjoyed a yearly income of at least 60,000 livres. Barely had the letter conveying his offer gone on its way, when he left his home which was near Chartres, and came to Paris. He took pains to notify the mayor of his locality of his dwelling-place, so that he might ever be found in case of necessity, and hardly left his room from a fear of making those who might come in quest of him wait. In spite of his sixty years, he emigrated shortly afterwards, and entered as a private a military company, recruited from the nobility, at Coblenz. He died in harness. When a man thus sacrifices his life to his principles, he is entitled to the respect even of those who do not share theirs with him. Our Revolution produced more men of that stamp than is generally believed.

One of the acts of the Constituent Assembly was to have painful consequences for me. Although the annihilation of the Parlements had been resolved, it had not proceeded as rapidly as desired, because something had to be estab-



lished in their stead, and this could not be done without much labor and some forethought. One of the first acts of the Assembly was to decree that the chambers (courts) sitting during the vacation term, and which were at work in October, 1789, should be the only ones, until such time as it should be otherwise ordained, to try and render judgment upon all civil and criminal cases. Consequently, the Parlement did not meet again in the following month of October, and thus did it pass out of existence.

The Chamber sitting during the vacation term in Paris was burdened with an immense amount of work, during the time this kind of interregnum lasted, and it accomplished its task in such a fashion as to reflect great honor upon its members.

The Assembly had decreed that the preliminary judicial investigation in the matter of crime should be public. In many respects this was an excellent thing, but it had until then never been practised in France. The drawing up of the first report in conformity with this system, fell to the lot of my father. It was, I believe, a case of uttering forged *assignats* (paper money), or documents of that kind. The charge was brought against two brothers belonging to a most respectable family in the ranks of the *bourgeoisie*, the brothers Agasse. A few youthful follies had led them to commit the deed, and one could not help becoming interested in their fate, and feeling deeply for their family. They were condemned to death, and the sentence was carried out. Their execution became the starting-point of a hot struggle between the well-rooted opinion that a criminal conviction reflected dishonor on a whole family, and the principle laid down by the Assembly that criminal offences, and the punishments that follow them, are entirely a personal matter.

It was a fortunate thing for this principle that the first



who furnished the application of it should be members of so honored a family. A large and remarkable amount of practical sympathy was shown to it, and, in this particular instance party lines were somewhat obliterated in the force of so terrible a blow. This fact does honor to the kindness of French character, and so I make mention of it. There were, alas, in those days, so many occurrences of a different nature.

Thus it came about that the principle triumphed, and the Agasse family was allowed to hold up its head, and retain its position in society. My father contributed in no small degree towards such a result, owing to the way in which he drew up his report, and in so doing, he found some compensation for all that was painful in the duties which he had to perform. They came to an end at last. The new judiciary order was installed, and the *chambre des vacations* was dissolved. With it passed away the last vestige of the Parlement.

The National Assembly, when pronouncing the dissolution of that chamber, could not help doing homage to its conduct, and to the services which it had rendered.

But, ere they went their different ways, at a moment when they were together for the last time, when they were about, so to speak, to represent the funeral procession of that old and honored French magistracy, were they to silently steal away? The matter was discussed at the house of M. de Rosambo, the President of the Chamber. The advice of M. de Malesherbes, M. de Rosambo's father-in-law, was sought.

The only question broached at first was a declaration, a sort of farewell from the old magistracy of France to Frenchmen, a kind of public testimonial it thought itself entitled to render unto itself; that in surrendering into other hands the sacred deposit of justice, it was handing it

over pure and unblemished, such as it had received it from the sovereign power. It did not hesitate to express a hope, in the interest of the public, that those to whom it was to be entrusted in the future, should never make worse use of it.

This idea was put on paper in many shapes. I saw the various drafts. Some of them were indeed grand. But, as a result of being so many times drawn up, the declaration lost its original character. It was thought that a protest was more proper, even indispensable; that one could not give assent, without some reservation, to so stupendous an act as that of the complete annihilation of those Parlements which had for so long a period upheld, almost single-handed, the rights of the citizens and the prerogatives of the Crown. Was it not patent that this annihilation had for its principal object the breaking down of all barriers which might still interpose between the throne and the man of new ideas?

When such ideas are once given expression to, the strength to resist them is generally lacking. A protest was therefore drawn up and adopted without difficulty. Then arose the question as to what was to be done with it. My father was in favor of making it public, and I supported him in this resolve as far as lay in my power. We argued that there still existed the absolute freedom of printing anything one saw fit. The journals of the day were filled with protests of all kinds, and that these protests on which we set so little store, could only acquire any value through the effect produced by them on the public mind. We were also agreed as to its being undignified for us to let our protest see the light of day, in the case of the Parlement being re-established, if we kept it hidden from view for the nonce. Such a triumph, achieved as it would have been without risk of danger, would have something childish about it, to say the very least.

My father, convinced of the soundness of these reasons, spared no efforts in getting his colleagues to view matters in the same light; but he was unable to bring them to his way of thinking, and it was decided, by a large majority, to preserve secret the protest. To M. de Rosambo was entrusted the care of putting the document in a place of safety.

Two years later, it was delivered up by the man who had joined him in seeking to hide it, and it gave rise to the war unto death which the Committee of Public Safety declared against all the members of the *chambre des vacations* in the first place, and, in the second, against all members of the Parlement. It is possible, it is even probable, that had this pretext not been afforded, others would have been found; but, after all, the one furnished by that unfortunate document was as serviceable as any other. Had it been published at the time of its drawing up, it would, like so many others, have been forgotten the following day, whereas, when it became known for the first time in the last days of 1793, it almost constituted a new crime.

Having promulgated the Constitution, nothing remained for the Constituent Assembly but to withdraw entirely from the public scene. I was a witness of the spirit of joyous hope which filled the breasts of the Royalists on seeing the constituent deputies become ordinary citizens once more. In vain did the daily returns of the elections, which were taking place to provide for their successors, show that these successors would prove much fiercer and more formidable enemies; the warning note was not heeded.

I had a special opportunity to form an opinion of what might be expected therefrom. M. Ducos, in whose company I had, as I have already told, followed a portion of the events of 1789, came to Paris as a deputy from Bordeaux.

Although our intercourse had suffered an interruption of

over a year, he had hardly reached town, when he wrote me a pressing note to call on him at his hotel, where he lay tired and ill. I found him surrounded by the whole of that deputation from the Gironde which played so important a part in the Legislative Assembly, and during the early days of the Convention, those men whose names were Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Boyer-Fonfrède, and so on. He kept me to breakfast with them, and in their company I spent the whole of the morning.

All of them were intoxicated with visions of future successes, and they did not take the trouble of hiding from me, although I had been introduced to them as an out and out Royalist, if not their plans, at least their ideas, which were of the republican order. I was none the less struck with their madness. The eloquence of Vergniaud made itself felt even in the course of ordinary conversation, and it seemed to me destined to become the most formidable weapon of the party whose cause he was embracing. I noticed with surprise the profound contempt which these gentlemen professed for their predecessors, the Constituents, and the manner in which they looked upon these narrow-minded people, imbued with prejudice, who had never been able to turn circumstances to any account.

What I heard at that breakfast convinced me that we were about to encounter far greater perils than those which had beset us for three years past.

A month afterwards I was compelled to forego the society of Ducos and of his friends, as our paths were too divergent; and, in truth, the march of events soon became more rapid. The month of October was made memorable by the massacres at Avignon, where the ice-house was packed with the corpses of those charged with having opposed the reuniting of this part of the country with France. Ere the year had run out, a decree was issued requiring Monsieur to return

to France within two months, failing which he was to be deprived of his eventual right to the Regency.

A first decree had already been promulgated against the *émigrés*, and there was this to be noticed about it, namely, that although the debate over it had been a lengthy one, yet not a single voice had been raised against the injustice of its measures. The only serious difficulties that had arisen were with regard to the extent of the penalties to be inflicted upon those who should prove refractory.

This decree was the first subject of open disagreement between the Legislature and the king, who refused the royal sanction to it. Shortly afterwards, he also vetoed a decree directed against the clergy. This decree had for its object to deprive of both stipend and pension all priests who should decline to take the civic oath.

A few days later, Pétion was elected mayor, and Maunel *procureur syndic* of the *commune* of Paris. These two men were the faithful tools of a committee of surveillance established within the bosom of the Legislative Assembly. Through them, the revolutionary party was master of Paris.

The first day of 1792 was signalized by a decree which placed under arrest, should they appear in France, the king's brothers, and also the leaders of the *émigrés*, while the High Court at Orleans was deputed to try them. Another decree, bearing date February 9, placed all the estates of the *émigrés* under the ban.

On the 23d and 24th of January, the grocers of Paris were abandoned to the fury of the populace, which pillaged all their shops with impunity. At as early a date as February 11, I saw crossing the grounds of the Tuileries a deputation of pillagers who were on their way to the Assembly, preceded by a red cap. It was the first public appearance of this popular emblem.

The deputation was admitted, whereupon it complimented



the legislators on the success of their work. The legislators replied to these congratulations by allowing the mayor of Étampes to be butchered while in the exercise of his office, and by passing a decree shielding from punishment the leader of the Avignon assassins, Jourdan, nicknamed *Coupe-tête* (chopper of heads), and by proclaiming an amnesty in favor of all crimes and misdemeanors perpetrated as the result of revolutionary action.

## CHAPTER IV

Aspect of the Palais-Royal, the centre of the revolutionary movement: the cafés, the gambling houses, the dissolute women — Louis XVI.'s mild protest against the outrage of the 20th of June — M. de La Fayette's isolation — Renewed activity of the revolutionary party — The fête of the Federation — The beautiful Mme. Fontenay, afterwards Mme. Tallien — The Queen at the Italian Opera — The attack on the Tuileries, August 10 — Anarchy's triumph — The September massacres — The Prussians enter Champagne — Reasons for the sudden retreat of the Duke of Brunswick — Affection for the monarchical system shown by the princes upon the downfall of royalty — The trial of Louis XVI. — Popular songs expressing pity for the king — The day of judgment and sentence — The execution on January 21 — Councillor Pasquier at the foot of the scaffold — Deep emotion of the crowd and public grief — The murder of M. de Saint-Fargeau — Fury of the men of the revolutionary party — The law affecting the *suspects* — Councillor Pasquier's marriage.

THE rapid progress of the Revolution was now plain to all, and its power was about to be increased by a foreign war. I spent my time at the club de Valois, which was largely composed of men sharing my opinions, and we confided to each other our melancholy apprehensions. This social circle had its habitat in the Palais-Royal, for so long a time the starting-point of all the mad acts and of all the atrocities which occurred during the first years of the Revolution. You knew nothing, you saw nothing, you were behind the times, did you not go by the Palais-Royal at least two or three times a day.

It was there that I saw Camille Desmoulins standing on the historical chair from which, on the 14th of July, he preached his crusade against the Bastille. On the 6th of October, I witnessed the arrival of a procession of furies,

carrying on pikes the heads of the *gardes du corps* massacred on the threshold of the king's and queen's apartments. These were the same women who had preceded the escort of the king and royal family, when he was brought back to Paris "of his own free will."

There was a circus in the middle of the garden, the door of which had an iron box with a slit. Into it were dropped, unsigned, the crazy elucubrations which the authors did not dare to openly acknowledge. The Abbé Fouché was in the habit of delivering harangues there. It was not long ere he was hurried away and dragged to the scaffold. Each and every party came in turns to the Palais-Royal, in quest of headquarters, and there all of them succumbed victims to the party which had gained ascendancy the day before.

Thus, to refer to one of those incidents which made the greatest impression on me, I saw M. d'Épréménil, the object of my admiration in 1787, who at that date stood in high favor with the masses, whose name was breathed within the precincts of the Palais-Royal as that of a hero, whose portrait was displayed in all shop-windows, dragged bleeding through the streets, at the end of 1791. The National Guard succeeded at last in rescuing him from the clutches of the populace, and led him half dead to the *hôtel* adjoining the *Trésorerie*. It was there that to M. Pétion, mayor of Paris, who had hastened to his side, he spoke the following prophetic words: "And I too, sir, have been carried in triumph by the people!"

Only one thing did the glory of the Palais-Royal of that period lack, and that was to number among the clubs of all kinds within its precincts, the club of the Jacobins and later that of the Cordeliers; but, at all events, the most active intercourse did not for a single day cease between its cafés, its political groups, and these two powerful associations.

But it is not merely in the respect of political or popular scenes that the Palais-Royal afforded a spectacle, the like of which would be with difficulty found in history, during the whole of the time that the National Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, and the Convention were in existence. It was the scene of all that was disorderly and dissipated in a society on the verge of dissolution.

Let the reader picture to himself one of the most infamous resorts of the capital, enlarged so as to occupy the whole space of the garden, of the galleries, and of the adjacent buildings. Let him imagine the whole of that area invaded in broad daylight, and as far into the night as the closing of the gates would allow, by a swarm of disreputable women whose effrontery knew no bounds; certain little exhibitions of the most disgusting kind, to which they were always admitted free of charge, because they helped to attract spectators; public gambling-houses of all kinds, established in a dozen different corners. At first these resorts flourished with absolute impunity, and, when the law forbade their existence, they placed iron gratings at the head of every staircase, thus defying the representatives of the law, who, with so many obstacles in their way, reached the tables only to find them swept of everything. There remains to be mentioned the numerous restaurants where occurred the orgies that were a necessary prelude to plots, pillagings, and uprisings.

We had in our club two party men who were entirely opposite to each other. The one was the Vicomte de Noailles, a deputy of the Constituent Assembly. He was about to take service in the army which was to penetrate into Belgium under the orders of General Dillon, and was busily engaged getting all necessary military equipments. The other was M. de La Briffe, an officer in the *régiment du Roi*, who was returning to Coblenz, whence he had come

in quest of funds, and to provide himself with everything that was requisite for going into campaign. They went about together to look for the horses they needed, giving each other the benefit of advice and of their mutual discoveries. As for myself, I helped both of them in this pursuit. It is a far cry from such almost knightly good-fellowship to the sanguinary frenzy which, four months later, required the shooting down of *émigrés*, when they were taken sword in hand.

With regard to our club de Valois, composed as it was of men of such opposed sentiments and opinions, there was one remarkable thing about it, the memory of which is worth preserving. During its four years' existence, several very lively quarrels took place within its walls, and, as a sequel, challenges followed out of which the parties were easily talked; but neither during its existence, nor afterwards, did any deed emanate therefrom, which could reflect dishonor on any of its members. Quarrelsome arguments were indeed frequent, but as among gentlemen; and when, during the reign of the Committee of General Safety, a list of the members was asked for, as likely to furnish an excellent document from which to draw, in making up the list of the *suspects*, the list could not be found, nor could the memory of any of the servants of the establishment make good the deficiency.

Louis XVI. contented himself with protesting, by means of a proclamation dated June 22, against all the outrages heaped upon him, and with declaring that force would never obtain his sanction for decrees which he judged inimical to the public weal. This was deemed sufficient action in defence of the monarchy, and yet the outrage committed on the 20th of June was the most favorable opportunity afforded for rallying about the throne a host of men only too ready to come to its assistance.



But a signal was necessary, and this signal could only come from the throne. The throne made no sign. The constitutional party of the Constituent Assembly alone made a demonstration in the king's favor, but it had no longer any actual weapon at its disposal. Its principal leader, M. de La Fayette, was, it is true, at the head of an army; but it was not long ere it was discovered how little that army was under his control. On the 16th of June he wrote a very strong letter to the Assembly, and on the 28th, he appeared at the bar of the House to ask, in behalf of that army, that the authors of the outrage of the 20th of June should be brought to punishment. His principal hope, in risking this step, was based on the National Guard, whose feelings he thought to stir up by the sight of its old commander. He had apparently flattered himself that it would close around him, and had no doubt that it would help him, when the time came to lay down the law to the factious elements. In that respect, the undertaking was an excellent one; but it was badly conceived, and could only have been successful by a concerted action with the king, seconded by the ministry, and by the court.

Far from all this taking place, M. de La Fayette remained completely isolated. The National Guard did not venture to commit itself under a leader who was no longer in command of it, whom it saw only in passing fashion, and the only result of his step, the most honorable perhaps of his life, was the loss of the little influence which still clung to him.

After the terrible day of June 20th, the revolutionary and anarchical party became all the more active and energetic as the weakness of the party which opposed it became manifest. It contemptuously rejected the petitions which reached it from the provinces, and disbanded not only the staff of the Paris National Guard, but those of the National

Guard in towns of fifty thousand inhabitants, knowing full well that these staffs might be the nucleus of certain elements of resistance. It next proclaimed the country to be in danger, and took part with Manuel and Pétion against the departmental administration of Paris, which had suspended them, and ordered that they should be reinstated. To crown all, it disarmed respectable people everywhere, and gave arms to the dregs of the population.

It was expected that the 14th of July, the anniversary of the renewal of the federation, would be marked by some crisis, but nothing occurred. A few preparations were still lacking, and the catastrophe was postponed.

I took part in that celebration. Accidentally I met there the beautiful Mme. de Fontenay, afterwards famous as Mme. de Tallien. She then shared all my fears regarding the present, all my anxiety for the future. I have often recalled this occasion, wherein we found ourselves in the enjoyment of a sort of intimacy, and which was so close to the time when our destinies were to carry us away by divergent routes. Hers led her by way of the prison cells of the Terror to a marriage with the Prince de Chimay, after sharing the couches of Tallien, of Barras, and of Ouvrard.

Whatever may be said and thought of her private life, all those to whom it befell to know her well, cannot, in addition to the homage due to her wonderful beauty, well deny her a sincere recognition of her goodness of heart, and of the happiness she ever experienced in helping people in the most troublous and dangerous moments.

It was in such company that I saw Louis XVI. swear, for the last time on the altar of the country, fidelity to the Constitution. I still see Panis and Sergent, with their tri-color sashes, riding about the Champ de Mars. They had more power than their sovereign, and for them only did the crowd of *sans-culottes*, who bore inscribed on their hats "Long live Pétion!" respectfully open a way.

With the king, the *fédérés* took oath to respect the Constitution, and three days later several of them appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and boldly demanded the suspension of the executive power in the person of the king. They also called for the impeachment of M. de La Fayette, the punishing of the directorate of the Department of the Seine, and the renewal of the judiciary. To all these requests, the President, M. de Vaublanc, contented himself with the answer that the public weal should not be despaired of.

Similar demands were preferred during the following days, and at last it became so evident that the factious element was in possession, that the members of the directorate of the Department of the Seine, the only administrative power in the capital which was not in its hands, thought it incumbent on them to resign. M. Roederer, the *procureur-syndic*, alone remained at his post.

During the same period, massacres, which remained unpunished, took place in several towns of Provence, notably at Arles. They were the forerunners of the arrival in Paris of that famous battalion of *Marseillais*, which played so decisive a part on the 10th of August.

Never perhaps did any party proceed in so bold and open a fashion at the greatest work of destruction ever entered upon. Theories and empty phrases became a thing of the past; it was a mere question of going straight to the goal. People were impatient to strike a blow; they said so openly, and the threat was quickly followed by the deed.

What could those whose mission it was to curb this audacious activity do to oppose it? What means had they for resisting it? People were, alas, indulging in the wildest illusions! During those last months I saw our unfortunate queen, at a performance of Italian opera, greeted with the cheers of a society audience which was eager to give her

such small consolation. I saw this audience go wild when Mme. Dugazon sang with Mermier the *Événements imprévus* duo, which ends with the following words: "Oh, how I love my master! Oh, how I love my mistress!" And, upon her return to the Tuileries, there were those who did not hesitate to tell her that she had just listened to a genuine expression of the feelings of her subjects towards her.

Men most clever and dignified lost much precious time in obscure and insignificant intrigues, and in seeking to bribe a few deputies.

Because they had safely emerged from the events of the 10th of June in spite of their not having foreseen them, they fondly imagined that if they but kept watch, scarcely anything else was to be dreaded. So many, moreover, were mad enough to think that it was all nothing more than a temporary trouble which had to be gone through, and depended upon the assistance promised by the Duke of Brunswick, which they thought was close at hand. All that was needed, they said, was a little patience!

Yet, in the meanwhile, preparations were bravely and faithfully being made, it must be admitted, to resist in case of need, an attack upon the Tuileries. The king had still at his disposal a regiment of the Swiss Guards, and a few battalions of the National Guard, whose loyalty was undoubted. These ready means of defence were increased by a number of devoted followers, to whom free access to the château had been granted, and who had firmly resolved to make a rampart of their bodies in defence of the royal family.

Together with the Prince de Saint-Maurice, I resolved upon joining this faithful band. On the morning of the 9th of August, we wrote to M. de Champcenetz to ask him for cards of admission. They had not reached us by evening, and during the night between the 9th and 10th of

August, we made several vain attempts to get into the château, which was then being threatened. If I make a note of this fact, it is not because of its actual importance, but because of a couple of circumstances pertaining thereto, one of which was of a fatal nature, while the other was fortunate to a singular degree. The card which I had asked for on the 9th of August reached me by the local post two days later, when all was over. How was it that it should have been so long delayed in transmission, without being intercepted? How was it, then, that it did not bring about my arrest? It was a piece of good luck which I have never been able to explain. Fate was not equally kind to the Prince de Saint-Maurice. His readiness to serve the king had had no other result than mine, with the exception that his card did not reach him, and that he never discovered any trace of it. He lost his head on the scaffold, under the accusation of having been one of the defenders of the Tuileries.

Both of us witnessed the whole scene. The king passed us as he crossed the garden of the Tuileries, yielding to the advice of going to the Assembly, in order to place himself under its protection. As we left, cannon was being fired across the garden. It was a short-lived fight, but its effect was to destroy the most powerful and ancient dynasty reigning in Europe.

The inevitable consequences of this event were a fearful state of confusion, and an actual dissolution of society. No longer did any one feel any security. No one expected to see the next day. My own safety was most seriously compromised by an imprudent detail of costume. On the morning of the 11th, I made the mistake of going out with my hair trimmed and gathered up with a comb. I had forgotten that this mode of wearing the hair formed part of the uniform of the Swiss Guards. This slight indication



was sufficient for two or three hundred angry men to pounce upon me on the boulevard de la Madeleine. I was unable to make myself heard, and so was dragged to the place Vendôme, where the mob was stringing up to lamp-posts all the Swiss and other fugitives from the château they could lay their hands on.

I was rescued by a little drummer of the precinct, who recognized me. It was he who was in the habit of notifying me when it was my turn to go on guard duty, and as I never answered the call, I was in the habit of paying him somewhat liberally for finding a substitute for me. He fought his way into the midst of the raving horde, commanded silence by a vigorous beating of his drum, shouted that I was not a Swiss, and gave my name and place of residence. On the strength of his testimony I was escorted home in triumph. I expressed my gratitude towards the little drummer by bearing the expense of his outfit as a volunteer.

The best thing to be done was to fly from the scene of so many horrible things. My family resolved upon this course, but the gates of the city were closed, and passports were most difficult to obtain. I had for four or five days tried to compass this end, when Ducos, whom I had not seen for several months, heard of my efforts. I deeply regret not having kept the note he wrote to me on the occasion. It contained a few words of reproach delicately expressed, and of sorrow at the fact that our differences of opinion had kept us so much apart that I did not come to him in my predicament.

I called on him, and he did all he could to procure for me the necessary documents with which to leave Paris. This gave me the opportunity of seeing him several times. On each occasion I plied him with questions, and learned with interest of the plottings which had brought about



the sanguinary catastrophe we had just witnessed. In the exultation of his triumph he revealed everything, and he told me a thing which the *Memoirs of Mme. Roland* have since confirmed, namely, the resolution reached at one of their caucuses, to sacrifice one of their number, and to have him murdered, in order to impute his assassination to the Court, if no other means were forthcoming to excite the people against it.

One Grangeneuve, I believe, had made the sacrifice of his life, and was to be the victim. The room occupied by Ducos looked out upon the place Vendôme. One could see from his window the men who were engaged in demolishing the magnificent equestrian statue of Louis XIV. I did not hesitate to appeal from such vandalism to his high-mindedness, even to his very pronounced taste for the fine arts. He replied: "Fear not. Liberty erects a hundred times more monuments than she levels." In spite of this language of the enthusiast, it was an easy matter for me to perceive that the conquerors were not free from anxiety. Ducos was one of those who during the course of the Revolution brought about many occurrences which they did not wish to see repeated the next day.

I was not able to leave Paris until the 29th. I had barely reached Abbeville, where I had decided upon seeking an asylum with my family, when I heard of the September massacres. In the meanwhile, the Prussians were pouring into Champagne. How was it that this invasion of foreign troops, which must have been planned with so much care, which was taking place under circumstances apparently so favorable, was nevertheless so quickly checked? In those days one hardly knew how to explain this phenomenon.

As is always the case when extraordinary things happen, the words treachery and corruption were on many lips. The revelations which were made later do not leave in

doubt the case of the first check met with by the coalition, the consequence of which made Europe a battle-field for over twenty years.

The sovereigns had considered the enterprise upon which they had entered as one so easy of accomplishment, that it had never entered their minds to call a truce to their rivalry.

Prussia and Austria were more intent upon the advantages to be derived by each of them from the campaign, than upon its success, the principal result of which seemed to them assured. The French princes, and the *émigrés* with whom they had consulted, had inspired them with their own confidence, and had constantly repeated to them that they had but to show themselves, for the fortified towns to open their gates to them, for the regiments to disband, even if they did not, as soon as they saw them, come and flock round the old French standard.

It so happened that Austria bestowed her attention above all on the acquisitions she meditated making in Flanders, in order to aggrandize her provinces in the Netherlands, and that a gap opened in the centre of Champagne by an army of 60,000 or 70,000 Austrians and Prussians under the Duke of Brunswick was considered sufficient to cause a counter-revolution to break out in France.

But when it was seen that the most important of the fortified towns refused to answer a call to surrender, and showed their intention of standing a siege, that the troops of Dumouriez, after bearing the brunt of a first attack, showed a bold front in lieu of disbanding, the Duke of Brunswick began to ponder over matters. His army, which had reached the heart of Champagne, was suffering greatly from sickness engendered by a somewhat rainy autumn, and was getting weaker every day. In the case of defeat, he could see no road by which to retreat except the narrow gap

he had opened, thus being compelled to pass once more through a thoroughly exhausted district. He argued that one could not, with an army of 60,000 men, risk continuing his advance on a capital of 800,000 souls, whose population might be driven to a desperate defence, and which, moreover, was covered by an army less to be despised than had been thought. He had, moreover, to take into consideration the displeasure of his sovereign, who was indignant at Austria's feeble co-operation. He therefore resolved on entering upon a course of negotiation with the French general. Dumouriez did not throw many obstacles in the way of a retreat, for which he prayed as earnestly as did his opponent.

I returned to Paris with my family in the course of November. The information that I had gleaned in the Northern Departments, those comprising the old provinces of Normandy, Picardy, and Flanders, caused me to return to Paris painfully convinced that if up to the night of the 10th of August the king could have been prevailed upon to place himself at the head of the Swiss Guards, strengthened by two or three battalions of the National Guard, and had then made his way to that part of the country, he would not have had to despair of his cause or of his life.

The aspect of these departments was all the more noteworthy, from the fact that in spite of so many strange events, it has changed little and remains about the same at the time I write. It was not a royalism as ardent as that of La Vendée, but it embodied a firm attachment to order, to duty, and to the sanctity of an oath; it represented an incarnate horror of any recourse to violence. Assuredly the sentiment prevailing was in favor of the Constitution, but the Constitution with royalty as a part of it, and people were all the more prepared to defend the latter, for the reason that they felt sure that its abolition would bring about the downfall of the other.

It is clearly demonstrated to me that at the time Louis XVI. succumbed, he had many more partisans in France than when, a year before, he retreated by way of Varennes. Unfortunately, he was not informed as to his actual position, and the national feeling was wrongly gauged at the Tuileries. And so, through blunder after blunder, through misfortune after misfortune, we found ourselves, at the end of 1792, delivered up defenceless to the plans of the victors of the 10th of August and of the assassins of the month of September.

The trial of the king was the first thing to which they devoted their attention. Must I speak of the agonizing days which this trial made me go through? Yes, indeed; for if ever this manuscript is published, if even it is merely preserved in my family, I do not wish it to remain unknown that my father and I contributed, in so far as lay in our power, to the defence of our unfortunate king. My father, who was particularly intimate with the family of M. de Malesherbes, and had in his parliamentary career enjoyed frequent intercourse with Messieurs Tronchet and De Sèze, advocates in the Paris Parlement, was, as a matter of course, in a position to tender him every assistance that lay within his power. He took part in their private deliberations, and during the course of the trial he occupied a seat in the tribune set aside for the king's defenders, taking notes with them, and assisting them in their task.<sup>1</sup>

During that time, I never left the public tribunes and the hallways of the House, going about in quest of information, gathering the slightest straws which showed how the wind blew, and bringing them all to my father, who would communicate them to the other gentlemen. It was then, that having seen with my own eyes the shameful manœuvres of

<sup>1</sup> In this connection, see p. 401, Vol. II., of the *Histoire du procès de Louis XVI.*, published in 1814 by Maurice Méjean.

M. de Saint-Fargeau, I became convinced that he, more than any other man, brought about the death of the king.

For a short while people let themselves be lulled by illusions. The streets (who would believe it?) re-echoed songs expressing pity for the fate of the king. There was one written to the air of *Pauvre Jacques*. It closed with these words: *Louis n' eut ni favori ni maîtresse* (Louis never had either favorite or mistress). But popular sentiment was not powerful enough to have any influence within the precincts of the hall of the Convention. There it was merely the pitiless taking of votes.

In the tribune of the king's defenders, the result was being reckoned up, according to what was thought to be the opinions of each member, according to certain promises that had been made, and the result of these calculations pointed to an acquittal. The noble soul of M. de Malesherbes, especially, could not abandon the hope of which he so needed the support.

I can still see him, the day the vote was taken, checking off the votes on his note-book as they were recorded, and passing from fear to hope, then from hope to despair. The words he spoke at the bar of the House, when the vote was finally recorded, sufficiently showed how up to the last moment it had been impossible for him to realize the perpetration of so great a deed of iniquity.

Louis XVI. was fated to die, environed as he was with the hatred of many. But how different it would have been had he fallen under the knife of a few assassins! The crime could then have been laid only to the door of a few disowned wretches, condemned even by those who had incited them to the deed, and we should not have known those regicide *conventionnels*, who, as long as their life lasted did not want the Bourbons under any circumstances.

A few attempts which could and ought to have been made



to save the king were not attempted or were carried out too late. In this respect, blame fairly attaches to all the cabinets of Europe. A solitary man displayed some zeal. It was M. Oscarit, the Spanish Minister. He was without instructions from his government, and no financial or other resources were placed by it at his disposal. I saw him frequently at the house of the Lecoulteux family, and I was aware of his distress. He found help in that family, which advanced a no inconsiderable sum to him. With it he bought over a few votes, but there were bigger men than those he secured to be bought over. It was necessary to get at Danton, Santerre, and others of that calibre. For this, several millions would have been necessary, and then perhaps . . . ?

It remains for me to say that I saw the tragedy which was enacted on the 21st of January. I lived in a house which faced on the boulevard, at the corner of the church of the Madeleine. My father and I sat opposite each other all morning buried in our grief, and unable to utter a word. We knew that the fatal procession was wending its way by the boulevards.

Suddenly a somewhat loud clamor made itself heard. I rushed out under the idea that perhaps an attempt was being made to rescue the king. How could I do otherwise than cherish such a hope to the very last? On reaching the goal I discovered that what I had heard was merely the howling of the raving madmen who surrounded the vehicle. I found myself sucked in by the crowd which followed it, and was dragged away by it, and, so to speak, carried and set down at the scaffold's side. So it was that I endured the horror of this awful spectacle.

Hardly had the crime been consummated when a cry of "Long live the Nation!" arose from the foot of the scaffold, and, repeated from man to man, was taken up by the whole



of the vast concourse of people. This cry was followed by the deepest and most gloomy silence. Shame, horror, and terror were now hovering over the vast locality. I crossed it once more, swept back by the flood which had brought me thither. Each one walked along slowly, hardly daring to look at another. The rest of the day was spent in a state of profound stupor which spread a pall over the whole city. Twice was I compelled to leave the house, and on both occasions did I find the streets deserted and silent. The assassins had lost their accustomed spirit of bravado. Public grief made itself felt, and they were silent in the face of it. They respected this sentiment at least during the day of the execution; but the truce was a short one, and the murder of M. de Saint-Fargeau, by showing them the imminence of personal danger, soon inspired their ferocity with its accustomed energy.

I dragged along a weary existence in Paris from January until May. In the latter month I left alone to go back to Abbeville, a few days before the 31st of May. There were a thousand reasons for my not escaping an already too common fate, had I fallen into the hands of the commissioners to whom was entrusted the duty of gathering in the *suspects*. It was at that time that the prisons began to fill.

The fury of the men of the Revolution was fed by a multiplication of dangers. Within an interval of four months they had experienced the defection of Dumouriez and the rebellion of Lyons. The fortified town of Condé had been carried by the coalition, whom this victory brought within forty leagues of the capital. On the other hand, the rising in La Vendée had reached a serious point, through the capture of Saumur, and lastly, a departmental army was being organized, in the Calvados, by the efforts of the *suspects*, who had escaped the proscription of the 31st of May. This army was preparing to march against the Con-

vention, thus constituting the most important danger threatening it; but the peril was averted because people in Brittany and in Normandy soon discovered that these deputies were not seeking to re-establish royalty. This discovery paralyzed the support which the *suspects* had at first received. They have themselves admitted the truth of the charge in the writings they have left.

In the month of March, the revolutionary tribunals were organized, together with the Committees of General Police and of Public Safety. The *émigrés*, the aristocrats, and the enemies of the Revolution were all outlawed, and a revolutionary army was especially entrusted with hunting them down.

The law of the *suspects* spread out a huge net from which no one might hope to escape. Fresh prisons were opened in all directions, and they could scarcely hold the number of unfortunate people stowed away in them. The Convention let loose all over the country deputies chosen among the most ferocious and vicious of the Mountain's membership. France was handed over defenceless to these representatives of the people, clothed with the most unlimited powers, and disposing, at their own free will, of the liberty and life of any individual whom it pleased them to call a *counter-revolutionist*.

In every department, in every town, they found docile executors of all their acts of savagery, — a score or so of wretches, all or almost all sprung from the dregs of the population, hardly able to write their names, but invested with the title of members of the Revolutionary Committee. For the purpose of having their orders carried out, they called into requisition the help of the inert mass of citizens, which knows only how to sigh and obey, and thus, during a term of eighteen months, the very man who was to be arrested on the following day, took part in the arrests of

the foregoing one. He who was to perish during the next week, often escorted to the scaffold, while shouldering a pike, the victims of the current week. Officers, soldiers, generals, officials, rich and poor, all stood alike in fear of these modern proconsuls, and all fled who had the means of flight at their disposal. But it was very hard to escape their vigilance when one belonged to the proscribed class. I had in the first instance found a pretty safe refuge at Abbeville, owing to the generous and humane character of the residents of that town and the people of the surrounding districts. I soon had to leave, upon the arrival in those parts of the representatives Lebon and André Dumont, to whom was entrusted the care of extirpating from the departments composing ancient Picardy, the bad spirit said to be reigning therein. There was no room for hesitation; I had to fly before them.

I returned to the environs of the capital, and hid myself in the village of Champigny, three miles distant from it. I occupied a room that had been secured for me by the physician of the *commune* in the château of the former seignior who had emigrated, and whose estates had been confiscated to the nation. This château was occupied by a number of peasants who, like myself, had made it their home by renting from the municipality such rooms as could still boast of doors and windows.

I occasionally left my place of retreat to go and pay a visit to my family in Paris, where I was even compelled to remain for several days in succession for the purpose of getting ready for my marriage. When one ponders over the events of that epoch, when one recalls the life one led, the dangers which constantly surrounded one, everything in a word which ought to have crushed the soul and rent the heart, one finds it difficult to understand how it was possible to dream of anything else but one's dangers, that one

dared to give a thought to entering upon a matrimonial union.

Providence keeps in store for men many kinds of relief proportionate to the trials to which it subjects them, and the relief which it granted them during these terrible days consisted especially in the faculty of stupefying oneself in the matter of the most assured perils. This faculty seemed to gain all the more power as these perils became more formidable. It was certainly not resignation. That would have been a virtue, and such a virtue is not at all common. I did not hesitate to defy the dangers which were then the adjuncts of a marriage. With the aid of some influence derived from petty quarters, I was enabled to make my appearance at the municipality at dawn and when there were few people about. So, taking with me only some old servants as witnesses, I emerged safely from this difficult undertaking.

There was at the time but one municipality, whose sittings took place in the Hôtel de Ville, and before whom all marriages took place. The wedding of a prisoner under arrest as a *suspect* was to take place at the same time as my own. He had been granted permission to leave the prison in company with two guards, for the time necessary for the ceremony. He probably had cogent reasons for being so greatly desirous of plighting his troth, and the paramount one was probably that he foresaw his coming doom. Although we were not familiar with the particulars of his situation, it was none the less a touching one, which impressed us deeply. This ceremony was a dismal accompaniment to our union, which was, it will be seen, surrounded with little pomp. We took as much pains to conceal it as in normal times one took to hide a criminal deed.

The nuptial benediction was given to us by the Abbé

Salamon, *conseiller clerc* in the Paris Parlement. He hailed from the *comtat* d'Avignon, and had secretly received from Rome the powers of the *nunciatura*. He gave us the necessary dispensation, in view of the degree of consanguinity which already united us. I remained with my wife at Champigny, hiding as best we could our humble happiness.

## CHAPTER V

M. Pasquier, Senior, cast into jail — A prison looked upon as an asylum — Certificates of residence and of good citizenship — Tribulations of Councillor Pasquier, while seeking refuge at Montgé, near Juilly — Generous sentiments of the *bourgeois* class of Paris — Mme. Tavaux — The *citoyenne* Mottei — Levasseur's gratitude — Pen-picture of this *conventionnel* — Citizen Félix, the brother of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau — Trial and execution of M. Pasquier, Senior — Councillor Pasquier arrested at Amiens — Sent to Saint-Lazare with Mme. Pasquier, on the 8th Thermidor — A prison during the Reign of Terror — The 9th Thermidor — The prisoners set at liberty — Fouquier-Tinville before the tribunal and on the scaffold — Ovation to Tallien and Mme. Tallien at the Odéon theatre — France after Thermidor — The Vendéans — M. and Mme. Pasquier's life at Croissy — Their intercourse with Joséphine de Beauharnais — Mme. de Beauharnais, Joséphine's sister-in-law — Exorbitant prices of provisions — Scarcity of food.

THE steps I had been compelled to take in connection with my marriage had somewhat inured me to the dangers incumbent upon a sojourn in the capital. I was in the habit of going there to spend a day with my father. On one occasion, while we were at dinner, the Abbé Salamon rushed in to tell us that the protest drawn up by the *chambre des vacations* had been given up to the authorities by M. de Rosambo's valet, and that the Committee of General Safety had at once ordered the arrest of all the subscribers to that document, and, at the same time, of several other councillors of the Parlement.

M. Salamon thought I was among the latter. He was about to hide himself, and had had the courage to go all over the city to warn those of his brother councillors whom



he knew to be still within its walls. This act of devotion was all the more meritorious from the fact that no one incurred greater danger than he, owing to the religious functions which he had been practising secretly for several months past, the discovery of which exercise could not but fail to bring him to the scaffold at once. He urged us to fly, and not to lose a moment in hiding ourselves.

My father and I therefore went in different directions, after a fond embrace, and with hardly the strength of uttering a single word. We were never to meet again. I returned to Champigny. My father hid himself at La Muette, where he had dwelt during the course of the preceding summer. Two days later, he gave himself up, fearing that my mother might be arrested in his stead. Hardly was he within the walls of his prison, which had as inmates M. de Malesherbes, all the members of the Rosambo family, and a large number of his friends, when he experienced a feeling of relief, which, better than anything one might say, depicts the horrors of the existence we had been compelled to lead for over a year. Indeed, outside of prison, one dared not meet, see, speak, nay, almost look at anybody, so great was the fear of mutually betraying each other. Relatives, and the most intimate friends, dwelt apart in the most absolute isolation. A knock at the door, and one supposed at once that the commissioners of the Revolutionary Committee had come to take one away. When once behind the bolts, it was different. One found oneself, in a certain sense, once more enjoying social life, for one was in the midst of one's relations, of one's friends, whom one could see without hindrance, and with whom one could freely converse. The great judicial massacres (I am speaking of the month of January, 1794) had not yet taken place. Few days, however, went by without some victims; but the number of those behind the bars was so great that to each one

of them all danger seemed somewhat distant. And lastly, no sooner were many of them in jail than they ended in believing that they were safer there than out of doors. One could no longer (so at least they imagined) accuse them of conspiring; and, were the foreign armies to make great progress, as there were good grounds for supposing, they would, while in prison, be more out of the reach of popular frenzy than elsewhere.

So powerful a hold did these impressions take on the mind of my father, that having a few days later found the means of reaching me by letter, he urged me to reflect upon my situation, to well consider if the life that I was leading, and which he knew from experience, was not a hundred times worse than his own. Then, assuming that I would determine to get myself arrested, he informed me of an arrangement that he had entered into with the porter of the prison to reserve for him alone, for a few days longer, the room which he occupied, so that we could dwell together.

I demurred to this, and a few days afterwards I left Champigny. In company with my wife I sought another asylum at Montgé, ten leagues from Paris, and near Juilly, the old college of the Oratorians where I had been brought up. I am not going to speak of all my tribulations during the last part of that winter. They resemble those of many others so often told elsewhere.

The respectable proprietor who gave me a shelter, and had the courage to keep me in hiding, was a most humane man, and of an excellent and good-natured character. A patriot in 1789, he was still one in a small degree, while abhorring the cruel deeds perpetrated daily. For the sake of his peace of mind, it was necessary for him to believe in them as little as possible, and to explain them away, even to justify them. Hence, each time that the *Moniteur* would bring us the list of those whose heads had fallen under the

revolutionary knife, he would seek in their antecedents, in the alleged motives of their sentence, some reason that might make the crime of their death appear less odious. It was always, according to him, some particular case which did not bring with it any consequence to be feared by those who were not similarly situated. This kind of reasoning would lead to the liveliest discussions between us; but it did not prevent him from continuing to give a shelter to us, as well as to another family whose position was in many respects similar to our own, and which humored as little as I did our host's weaknesses.

Fortunate, a thousand times fortunate would have been my fate, if I had had only that painful contradiction to endure, but the difficulties of my situation were daily increasing. In order to render that of my father less dangerous, by exposing him to be looked upon as the father of an *émigré*, I was compelled to send to my mother, every three months, certificates of residence, which she might produce in case of need. Just then a law was passed which forced me to procure a certificate of a new kind, and which had to go back to 1790. In consequence of this, I had to return to Paris. I was fortunate enough to come safely out of this new ordeal, and to escape the clutches of the two Revolutionary Committees.

It would ill become me to remain silent concerning all the help and relief I received at the hands of that worthy Parisian *bourgeoisie* class. As I could not without danger take up my abode in my father's house, or in a lodging-house, I was hidden in succession by several shop-keepers in the streets in which I had dwelt, and particularly by a Mme. Tavaux, a mercer, who lived close to the house which my family had so long occupied in the rue Bourg-l'Abbé. Her husband had been under arrest three months, and he was greatly in jeopardy owing to his behavior on the 10th

of June, while a member of the National Guard. This did not prevent Mme. Tavaux, not only from giving me an asylum for two or three nights, but from taking all possible trouble to find for me the witnesses required in order to procure my certificate. The greater number of those whom she thus brought together had no acquaintance with me whatever, and yet, on her mere word, they ventured to compromise themselves in the most dangerous fashion, so as to get me out of my difficulty. Thus did I reap the fruit of a few slight services rendered by my people in other days.

I had just secured one of the precious certificates of residence which I had so eagerly sought. It had been granted to me by the General Assembly of the section, held in the church of the Trinité. I was about to depart, when a little man quietly approached me, and drew me aside under pretence of saying a few words. I followed him without fear, believing him one of the witnesses procured on my behalf, and whom I did not know. He turned out to be a member of the Revolutionary Committee, and, without further ado, he handed me over to a guard close by. The latter was ordered to take me before the Committee, and I remained in his custody until the members of it had assembled. No sooner had I been questioned, than it became an easy matter for them to elicit the fact that I was an ex-councillor of the Paris Parlement, and that my father was already under arrest. There was consequently no room for doubt that I was a good capture, and I was notified, in spite of all my protestations, that I was to be taken to the Luxembourg prison.

As it was necessary to make out a warrant for my arrest and order of committal, I was, while this was being done, taken into a room, where I was placed in custody of the same guard. Fortune willed that a young and rather good-

looking woman should come into it just about the same time. She was in a gay mood, and seeing me look rather disheartened, she could not resist the temptation of asking me the reason for being so downcast. I had no difficulty in enlightening her. As soon as I had told her my story, she exclaimed: "What's that? There is no personal charge against you, and they are going to send you to prison because you are your father's son! What nonsense! Wait a bit, I will go and talk to them." No sooner said than she knocked at the door of the Committee, imperiously demanded admittance, and walked in as if in her own house. Now this woman was no less a person than the *citoyenne* Mottei, the wife of the president of the Committee, and she exercised a powerful influence over her husband, who, on his side, held absolute sway over his colleagues. I soon heard an animated discussion wherein the voice of Mme. Mottei rose above all others. She came out at last, told me that she had done her best, and that there was a chance of my case taking a favorable turn.

I was indeed recalled by the Committee, and was examined anew, but much more carefully and more in detail. It was then, fortunately for me, discovered that I had never been a member of La Fayette's liberticide National Guard. In conclusion, the president informed me that as there was no personal charge against me, the Committee was inclined to set me free, if I could find some genuine patriot who would vouch for me. After thinking for a few moments, I bethought myself of Levasseur, and I gave his name. The mention of his name caused no little astonishment. They could not bring themselves to believe that I had such a sponsor; but as I insisted upon such being the case, it was settled that two members of the Committee should conduct me the next morning into the presence of the people's representative, and that meanwhile I should pass the night



in the *violon*. Such was the name given to the temporary prison attached to each guard-room. I managed to write from there to my mother and sister, telling them of my sorrowful plight, and of my determination to avail myself of Levasseur's protection. By six o'clock next morning both women were in his presence.

An excellent physician, but of unprepossessing appearance, and of somewhat rough character, although not deficient in many noble qualities, Levasseur, at the outset of his career in Le Mans had met with but little success in his practice. My father and mother, who appreciated him better than did his fellow-citizens, did their best to get him taken at his worth, and succeeded at last in establishing his reputation. He was truly grateful, became one of the habitués of the château de Coulans, and was associated with my mother in the care she gave and caused to be given to all the poor dwelling on her estate. His veneration for her, and his attachment to my father, were shown from that day on every opportunity. During a serious illness of my father, he did not leave his bedside for over a month, and very likely was instrumental in saving his life. When the Revolution broke out, he flung himself into it with a zeal which doubtless greatly influenced his daily habits, and from that time we saw a great deal less of him.

The turmoil which soon disturbed the province of Maine, one of the most troubled provinces of the time, compelled our family to leave it almost altogether during the course of the years 1790, 1791, and 1792. We were in Paris at the time of the meeting of the Convention, and, on our return, Levasseur had already signalized himself by a virulence which did not permit his holding the slightest intercourse with us. Shortly after, he voted for the death of Louis XVI., and his vote raised between us an unsurmountable barrier. He had been entrusted with several missions



near the armies, and had acquitted himself thereof with an amount of zeal and energy which had in special fashion enhanced his revolutionary reputation. Such was the man upon whom my mother and sister were about to call. He was manifestly ill at ease in his reception of them. Then, after uttering a few remarks on the difficulties attached to their request he said, addressing my mother: "But there remains something still more difficult, madam, and that is for me to refuse you anything. I will do what I possibly can." I was taken into his presence between eight and nine o'clock in the forenoon. At first his greeting was almost brutal. He scarcely seemed to know me again. He inveighed violently against aristocrats, counter-revolutionists, the execrable spirit of the old nobility, and especially that of the ex-parliamentarians. My escort augured badly for me from such beginning, and their countenances began to cloud. "But," he went on to say, "one must treat everybody fairly, even such people as those, and, as this man here, I can well recall that, when I was talking with my friend, the martyr of liberty (Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau), two days before his assassination, precisely of that detestable Paris Parlement, which he knew better than did any other, he distinctly told me that among the 150 members composing it, there were not more than seven or eight who were fit to understand him, and among these seven or eight he named the citizen here present. Such a tribute is a valuable one, but it is for you to appreciate its worth."

Great was the surprise of the members of my Revolutionary Committee on hearing such a name mentioned, and on having it invoked on my behalf. There was a little brief parleying, as the people's representative had much business to attend to, and so we had to leave at short notice, but it was already settled that I might be set at liberty.

Still, I was not at the end of my troubles. Levasseur lived in the rue Saint-Honoré, close to the club of the Jacobins, and, after leaving his house, as we were passing by the place Vendôme, it suddenly dawned on my two acolytes that considering that I had been so well thought of by liberty's martyr, I must also be well acquainted with his brother, the citizen Félix. It so happened that the citizen dwelt in the place Vendôme, and they suggested — a thing I did not dare refuse to do — that I should go with them, and ask for an invitation to breakfast. Happily for me he was out, for no man was more my enemy.

Having escaped this danger, I imagined that nothing was left for me to do but to go and receive my papers at the hand of the Committee, to take leave of them, and return to my place of refuge in the green fields. Alas, it was not to be so! I was told that my papers would be returned to me only on the following day. Some degree of suspicion still prevailed against me, and it was resolved to obtain some further information about me from citizen Félix. That was the worst thing which could happen to me. After much hesitation, I determined upon following the advice of my mother and sister, and of calling upon him. I returned to the place Vendôme, and was told at the citizen's residence that he would probably not return home for the day, but that if I was particularly desirous of seeing him, I could find him at his niece's, in the rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, where he was in the habit of taking his dinner. I lost no time in at once going to the other end of the city.

It here becomes necessary to give an idea of my costume, which consisted of what was then styled a *carmagnole*, that is, a short jacket and a pair of trousers of the same material. The material of my clothes was of the coarsest, viz. a heavy, dark brown, and shaggy swanskin. From the fact that for the last three or four days I had been con-

stantly going about the streets in the rain and in the mud, I was bespattered up to my knees. In this state I called at the hôtel of Mlle. Lepelletier, rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine. I asked to see her uncle. He had not arrived, but it was thought that he would make his appearance ere long. I begged permission, which was granted, of sitting down by the stove in the porter's lodge, while awaiting his arrival. I was sitting there very quietly, when after a certain amount of going to and fro between the hôtel and the lodge, a young valet wearing a *carmagnole*, — but such a *carmagnole*, the most elegant, the neatest, one could well imagine, — came in and said to me: —

“Citizen, the *citoyenne* Lepelletier has just learned that a *sans-culotte* was here awaiting the arrival of her uncle. She cannot bear the thought of his remaining in this place, and begs he will walk into the drawing-room.” I asked to be excused from such a courtesy, but on the message being transmitted to me a second time, I was compelled to yield, and I entered those large and magnificent rooms, in which I had been so often in other days.

I found Mlle. Lepelletier in one of the little rooms at the end of a long suite. She was just out of childhood, but seemed advanced for her years. By her side was a pleasantly mannered governess, who welcomed me most politely. As can be imagined, the conversation was somewhat embarrassed. I remained two mortal hours. It was plain that the citizen Félix would not dine there that day, so I took leave, and was going away greatly disappointed, when the governess followed me into one of the *salons*, and while begging forgiveness for her indiscretion, told me that she was greatly mistaken if she did not know me, that I might possibly have something important to say to or ask of her pupil's uncle, and that, if I was not afraid of trusting her, she was willing to place herself at my disposal. So kind

an offer could not be declined. I told her my name, whereupon she had much to say in connection with her having all along felt sure she had recognized me. She well remembered having met me in this *hôtel* with my grandfather and my father. Then, upon being informed of what I had to ask of the citizen Félix, she told me not to be alarmed, that he would certainly come during the course of the evening, that he could not refuse his niece anything, and that I should be commended to him by her in such a way that he could not but help doing what was right.

And indeed, next day, matters happened as I prayed for, but without my learning any details. After a final consultation, the Revolutionary Committee no longer hesitated to restore to me my certificates of residence and my passport, which it had seized, and to which it attached its visa. I left next morning for Montgé, with more reason than ever for blessing Providence, which had once more saved me from danger.

As I was desirous of thanking the courageous citizens who had so generously been my witnesses, Mme. Tavaux directed my attention to one of them, whose trade consisted in making and selling cockades and *bonnets de police* (forage caps). She advised me to purchase one. I, of course, did so, and asked him to select for me the finest in his stock. He handed me a superb *bonnet de police*, the top of which, lapsing over, formed a *bonnet rouge* (Phrygian cap) while its blue border was ornamented on the one side with the likeness of Marat, and on the other with that of the martyr of liberty. As a matter of course, I took great care not to object to this selection. Having next day to go beyond the city's gates by the Dammartin coach, and, as this trip was not without its dangers, I thought it well to supplement the protection afforded by my passport by donning my magnificent *bonnet*.

If it produced on the guards at the gate all the effect that I could desire, it did not fail to terrify all my poor fellow-travellers, who, for a league or two, believed that they had in their midst at the very least a commissioner of the Committee of Public Safety. To their great relief, however, their fright was dissipated, through a somewhat extraordinary circumstance. Among the passengers was a member of the Convention, and, who would believe it, one of the best of men, one Bailly, a former Oratorian, under whom I had pursued a part of my studies, and who had since then got married and settled in Dammartin. He protected the whole *canton*, and several of those who were in the diligence lived literally under his wing.

It ended in mutual recognition, and when the others saw that I was on a sort of footing of intimacy with him, a quite different idea was formed as to my personality, and so the journey came to an end under far better auspices than it had begun.

I was to meet Levasseur again later on. In 1799 he returned to his native city, poor, and burdened with a family, having no other resource than his medical profession, for his honesty ever remained unsullied during the revolutionary storm. He experienced great difficulty in making a living, because he was shunned by all those classes of society which could afford to pay decently for medical attendance. I had returned to my father's estate, and as I needed some care, I could hardly follow the lead of those who judged Levasseur severely, after the service he had rendered me. So I summoned him. He did not respond to my call, but sent me another physician, whom he entrusted with a message to the effect that it was better for both of us not to meet again.

It would have been as he wished, according to all probabilities, had it not been for the prefect whom Napoleon sent



into the Department of the Sarthe during the Hundred Days. Levasseur was weak enough to accept some kind of a position, the result of which was that one day I met him in the *hôtel* of the *préfecture*. We simply exchanged a few words of common politeness, and he took pains to cut this mere act of courtesy short. Six months later, the law pronouncing the banishment of all regicides forced him to go to Belgium. While there his practice probably brought him in a better income than it did in France. Ever true to his inflexible character, he recently published some *Memoirs*, wherein is to be found for the first time the glorification of the conduct of the *conventionnels* who, in 1793 and 1794, installed the Reign of Terror.

I need not say with what joy I found myself once more in the village of Montgé, the tranquil state of which was in strong contrast with the agitation which reigned in Paris. I was still dwelling in that peaceful village at Eastertide, at which period occurred the execution of all the parliamentarians who in 1789 and 1790 had composed the *chambre des vacations* in Paris, of M. de Malesherbes and of his family. It was at Juilly, in the very spot where the days of my childhood had run in so pleasant a course, that I learnt of the blow that had struck me. The death of my father was announced to me by the Oratorians, who still occupied the college, of whom several had contributed to my education, and through whom alone I still kept up some intercourse with the outer world. The kindly interest they showed me, the share which they took in helping me to bear my misfortune, will never fade from my memory.

I have since gleaned a few details about the closing scenes of my father's life. He was beloved in what is called the "Palais," in other words, among the advocates, the *procureurs*, and the members of the magistracy of minor rank. All these men had preserved some connection, not to say



influence, with the new tribunals, however repellant they might be to them; at any rate they attended their sittings.

Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor before the revolutionary tribunal, had been a *procureur* both at the Châtelet and in the Parlement. Several of his former colleagues still spoke to him occasionally, and one must do them the justice of acknowledging that it was always in the hope of helping some one in distress. One of them told me that on the day of the sentencing to death of M. Dalleray, a former *lieutenant civil*, he dared to ask Fouquier-Tinville, whom he met on the Pont-Neuf, as he came out of court, if he had ever known a more upright man than the one whose death he had just compassed. "No," replied Fouquier, putting his hand to his forehead, and immediately crossing to the other side of the bridge. It was M. Dalleray who made the following beautiful rejoinder to the tribunal. Upon being asked if he was not aware that the law forbade the sending of money to any *émigré*, he replied: "I am cognizant of such a law; but I know of one which takes precedence of it, and which enjoins upon a father to feed his children."

The men of the Palais therefore joined in a concerted action to save my father, and they extracted from Fouquier and the president of the tribunal the promise that if there was any possibility of separating his case from that of his colleagues, if he himself could supply the means towards this end, it should be so managed that his acquittal would follow. My father was notified of this. His colleagues had made choice of him to indite an address to be presented in common to the tribunal, and he had already drawn it up. I cannot say that he rejected the means of salvation offered him, for he would not even listen to the proposition. Nevertheless, when he was before the tribunal, he was the only one of all those indicted together to whom the president gave freedom of speech, as a consequence of the agree-

ment entered upon. He then read what he had written as their common plea of justification, and obtained the reward which he deserved, that of dying as he had lived.

I have since then frequently met a man who had taken cognizance of that document, ere it was read. This was M. Muraire, First President of the *Cour de cassation* under the Empire, and who, in 1794, was confined in the same prison as the members of the Paris Parlement. They were of the opinion that it would be well to seek his advice in the matter. Their confidence could not have been better placed. Consequently M. de Rosambo and my father obtained leave from the jailer to have an interview with him, on the night preceding their removal to the *Conciergerie*, and they brought him their work. M. Muraire has told me that it was remarkable for a noble candor, joined to the highest expression of dignity, but what he could not conceive was the faith that their knowledge as magistrates had finally given them regarding the strength and justice of their case. Once before a tribunal, they could not be brought to believe but that justice and the judgment would be one and the same thing. In spite of all they knew and all they saw, they could not agree to look upon as mere assassins the men sitting on the bench they had themselves so long occupied. M. Muraire was never able to speak of this scene without the tears welling up in his eyes.

I spent two months of fearful mental suffering in the locality where I had received the awful news. It was, I can never forget it, in the midst of some of the first days of a beautiful spring. All these dreadful misdeeds were being perpetrated with impunity under the rays of a most glorious sun. Alone with my grief, I would often wander for whole days through the wood and among the hills surrounding our retreat. I looked up to Heaven, calling upon it to avenge the crimes of the earth. Sometimes I thought

that they could not go unpunished, that justice was due us, and therefore it would be meted out.

During the course of the month of June, I was notified that my hiding-place had been revealed by a man-servant whom I had discharged eighteen months before. The Committee of General Safety had issued a warrant for my arrest which was to be executed next day by the Commissioners of the Revolutionary Committee of Paris, to whom was specially entrusted the hunting down of all members of the Parlement. The Commissioners failed to find me, for during the night I left with my wife for Picardy. I was still able to find in that hospitable province many helpful people, who were ready to give me the most generous assistance as soon as I informed them of my dangerous predicament. These people were proprietors of stage-coaches, innkeepers, and farmers. During nearly a whole month I wandered between Amiens and the frontier, trying to emigrate. This was the only means left to me of escaping from danger.

The battle of Fleurus, won by the French, had extended the frontier for a distance of twenty leagues, thus rendering the execution of my plan altogether impracticable. The news of this battle reached me at Abbeville, on the day previous to the one I had selected for leaving France. I was to have been taken in charge by some men who were generally employed in helping the priests, who courageously came from Belgium to bring religious ministration even to Paris.

My plan of escape undone, I was compelled to return to Amiens. Here I was met in an inn by members of the Revolutionary Committee of Paris, whose duty it was to arrest me. They had nevertheless lost trace of me, were no longer thinking of me, and had come to Amiens on another expedition. They arrested me, also my wife, and, placing us in separate postchaises, brought us back to Paris,

each of us having for travelling companion one of their odious selves. My companion was a little cripple, physically as hideous as his soul was perverse. He greatly enjoyed telling me that he had known me since childhood, and that he had leased chairs in our parish church. He took pains to add that he would ever remember the generosity of my grandfather and father who had often given him a *louis* by way of a New Year's gift. He was a fervent disciple of the new philosophy, and his memory was stuffed with passages from the works of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques. Then on passing a certain château, which was being demolished, he remarked: "No château ever falls but one sees twenty cottages arise in its stead."

On our passing through the village of Sarcelles, he gave me a curious example of that regeneration of morals towards which he and his compeers daily worked so zealously. On my pointing out to him a country residence of somewhat finer appearance, and better kept than those we had seen so far, for everything, in those days, presented an appearance of decay and neglect, he replied: "I should well think so. It is the house of our friend Livry. We often visit him. He still possesses, it is true, an annual income of 50,000 livres, but he is a first-class fellow. We have just married him to the *citoyenne* Saulnier, with whom he had so long cohabited. (She was *première danseuse* at the Opéra.) Come now, we said to him, it is time that this disgraceful state of affairs should cease. To the winds with family prejudice! The *ci-devant* marquis must marry the dancer. So he married her, and did wisely, for he might otherwise have already danced his last jig, or at the very least be rusticated in the shade of the walls of the Luxembourg prison." Happily, our two guards combined with the lofty sentiments of which I have just given an idea, a passionate fondness for money, and this was our salvation.

In order to despoil me of the few *assignats* which I still possessed, they confined us, on reaching our destination, in a little house situated close to the committee's headquarters. They kept us there about a week on condition that we should pay our daily expenses at an extortionate rate. Thus my entry into Saint-Lazare was delayed, and I was taken thither only on the evening of the 8th Thermidor. Had I been imprisoned there two days earlier, I might possibly have been taken away in one of those carts which during those two days carried over eighty people from the prison to the foot of the scaffold. Every one connected with the Paris Parlement, one of my brothers-in-law, and several of my friends, perished on the day of my entering prison. Had I arrived earlier, I could not have escaped their fate.

In this prison were still two of my brothers-in-law and a brother, hardly more than a child, but who had, in spite of this, been a prisoner for eight months. What a sight that prison presented! Gone were the days when my father had almost looked upon the prison of La Bourbe as a place of refuge. Death had since then claimed so many victims that no one could be deceived as to his impending fate.

In order to proceed more rapidly, a pretended belief in conspiracies alleged to be hatching in the prisons, with the object of overthrowing the Republic, was brought into play. This principle once admitted, the consequences followed as a matter of course; but what added to the horror of this mendacious discovery, was the means employed for giving practical effect to the principle. In every one of the large prisons were a certain number of scoundrels, apparently detained as prisoners like the others, but who were really there to select and draw up a list of the victims. Several of them had become known as spies, and incredible as it may seem, their lives were spared by those in the midst of



whom they fulfilled their shameful duty. On the contrary, the prisoners treated them gently and paid them court. I had scarcely passed the first wicket, and was following the jailer who was taking me to the room I was to occupy, when I found myself face to face with M. de Montrou, already notorious through a few somewhat scandalous intrigues, and whose adventures have since created such a stir in society. He came close to me, and without pretending to notice me, whispered into my ear the following salutary bit of advice: "While here, do not speak a word to anybody whom you do not know thoroughly."

On reaching with Mme. Pasquier the lodging destined for our use, and which had been vacated by the two victims of the previous day, we were soon surrounded by our relations, and by a few friends who hastened to offer us all the assistance they could. We were enjoying, as far as one can enjoy anything when in a similar position, these proofs of kindly interest and friendship, when one of my brothers-in-law, who was looking out of the window, exclaimed: "Ah, here is Pépin Dégrouettes about to take his daily walk. We must go and show ourselves. Come along with us." — "Why so?" I queried, whereupon I was told that he was the principal one among the rascals whose abominable rôle I have described. They were designated by the name of "moutons," a name consecrated by prison slang. Every afternoon he would thus take a turn in the yard, and it was for him the occasion of passing in review, so to speak, the flock which he was gradually sending to the slaughter-house. Woe unto him who seemed to hide, or to avoid his look! Such a one was immediately noted, and he could be sure that his turn would come next. Many a gallant man's death became a settled thing, because he was a few minutes late in coming down into the yard and passing under the fellow's notice. The surrendering of oneself to his discre-



tion was apparently a way of imploring mercy at his hands. We went through the formality, and it constituted a scene which I never can forget. I can still see him, a man four feet seven inches, or four feet eight inches high, hump-backed, of twisted form, bandy-legged, and as red-headed as Judas. He was completely surrounded by prisoners, some of whom walked backwards in his presence, earnestly soliciting a look from him.

We were told a few days later, that when the last list was made up, he and his acolytes had experienced a feeling of pity for my young brother whose name was on it, and that they had stricken it out. His lively, frank, and open demeanor, and the habit of seeing him for so long (he was, in spite of his youth, the *doyen* of the prison), had inspired them with a kindly feeling of which they could not divest themselves. To this must be attributed his not having shared the fate of young Mailly, who was sent to the scaffold for the offence they had committed in common, and which consisted in throwing in the face of the *concierge* of the prison some rotten herrings, telling him ironically that he might feast on them. Young Mailly had not yet reached the age at which the law sanctioned the infliction of the death penalty. This was to be later on one of the crimes with which Fouquier-Tinville was charged, and which brought about his downfall.

The evening of our entry into Saint-Lazare and the following day were passed in exchanging painful confidences with the members of our family, with whom we were once more united, and we had much to tell each other. The kind of isolation in which I had lived with Mme. Pasquier since our arrest had left me ignorant of the atrocities of the past week, and none had been more bloody.

We all considered ourselves doomed victims, and did not think that there remained the slightest chance of salvation,

when the morning of the 9th Thermidor dawned. The day passed without the slightest echo of what was happening outside penetrating our prison walls. On the morning of the 10th, a few of us were informed by turnkeys whom we had remunerated for certain personal services, that Robespierre had been brought to the prison during the night, and that those who had him in custody sought to have him incarcerated there, but the *concierge* refused to receive him. This alone was a sufficient proof that a most important event was taking place, and, during the course of the day we succeeded in obtaining newspapers which told us all.

How great were our feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and anguish, during the next few days! Was not the tribune of the Jacobins and that of the Convention still re-echoing but too often words of violence, and were not the most odious motions still being made? I can remember the day when a powder-magazine exploded in the plain of Grenelle. The concussion was terrible and half the windows in Paris were broken, while the walls of Saint-Lazare actually trembled. The wind blew from that quarter, and we were soon enveloped in clouds of smoke. What thoughts did not our imagination give rein to, ere we learnt the true reason of this commotion! For over an hour, nothing was dreamt of but a new revolution and the massacres which were to follow in its wake.

All these agonizing anxieties weighed more heavily on me than on any one else, for I was still to remain in prison for some length of time. It was then that I learnt that it is easier to endure a situation bereft of all possible illusions, than to face alternate feelings of hope and despair about a final result which can never be fully grasped.

My wife and I had entered Saint-Lazare completely resigned to our fate, and, in a measure, indifferent to it. We had fought for ourselves courageously and persever-

ingly, but fate had conquered, and nothing remained for us but to submit to the inevitable. When, at the end of a month, the prison doors which had been thrown open to so many remained closed to us, when we scarcely had as companions of our captivity any others than the terrorists who had come to take the places left vacant by their victims, a profound feeling of melancholy took possession of us, and I do not know how we could have fought against it, if our freedom, which came to us at the end of three or four weeks, had delayed much longer. Yet, many had been the efforts made to obtain it, some of them through most influential channels. Thus, Mme. de Fontenay, who shortly after became Mme. Tallien, attempted to befriend us; but, so long as the men who composed the Committee of General Police previous to the famous day were in the ascendant, it was found impossible to end our captivity.

Among these efforts one there is which has left a most touching memory with me. It was taken spontaneously by the inhabitants of the village of Montgé, where I had during several months found so precious a place of retreat. They assured those whom it concerned, that during my stay in their midst I had given them valuable aid in their enforced manufacture of saltpetre, and that I had won their friendship. So they prayed that I might be set free, "on the grounds of being their friend." I found this document a long while afterwards in the files of the Convention, at the time when I was engaged in taking from them all documents having reference to myself. I have kept it precious for twenty-five years, together with the official report of my arrest.

When I left Saint-Lazare, I found that the march of events had been rapid, and that their trend was more and more pronounced in favor of order and justice. After having been violently repressed, the more enlightened and

the more respectable portion of the population was about to enjoy once more the right of living openly. How can I describe the joy of the friends and relations come back to life from prisons, or from obscure hiding-places, who had lost all hope of meeting again, who mentally inquired as to the fate of beloved ones, and about those whom they had lost. Their sweetest consolation was to be able to weep together over those who had fallen under the revolutionary scythe. The first use to which they put their freedom was to make a public display of their grief and of their lamentations. During the Terror, and especially during the last six months of its reign, no one dared to wear mourning for those who had perished on the scaffold. Mingled with so many heart-rending recollections was the joy felt over a deliverance which might more appropriately be styled a resurrection. Assuredly, never did two more contrary and equally powerful emotions ever contest for the possession of the human heart.

None of the terrible laws made during the two past years were abrogated, but this did not trouble people. The greater part of the assassins, both leaders and hirelings, were still in possession of their lives; they mingled unpunished with their victims. Who was there to call them to account for the blood which they had shed? Contempt protected them against hatred, and so, escaping public vengeance, they vanished from sight.

A week after I left prison, I was called upon by the wretch who had conducted me thither. He had taken almost as much trouble to find my place of residence, as, two months earlier, he had to discover my asylum. He came to ask me to testify in writing to the kindly manner in which he had treated me. This document might stand him in good stead in case of need. I gave him a certificate to that effect. All or nearly all of us were in the habit of

doing the same thing. There is something lacking in one's existence if one has not known the joys of such a revenge.

Fate led me to the Palais de Justice on one of the days of Fouquier-Tinville's trial. I was unable to resist the desire of seeing with my own eyes this great act of divine justice, so I went in. The trial was taking place in the old *grand' chambre* of the Paris Parlement, in the very room in which I had been admitted into the ranks of the magistracy, where I had taken my first oath, and where the first scenes of the Revolution had burst upon me. In that room had sat the revolutionary tribunal. In it had come as prisoners, the Queen, Mme. Elizabeth, M. de Malesherbes, the members of the Paris Parlement, and lastly, my father. Thence, all of them had started for the scaffold, in company of so many more. And it was in that place that I saw sitting in the dock, into which he had so long brought his victims, the monster the mention of whose name had so often made me shudder.

He answered coldly to all the criminal charges made against him. He had, it has been said, a secret faith in a revolutionary upheaval that was to burst a few days after, and which was fortunately nipped in the bud. Sitting below him were the obscure assassins designated under the denomination of jurymen of the revolutionary tribunal. They bowed their heads, and seemed completely cast down. I certainly did not think I was to see that man again, yet fate had it in store for me that certain business should take me to the Hôtel de Ville the day of his execution, and I saw his head fall. He struggled against his doom like the coward that he was.

The man to whom public opinion attributed the merit of having brought about the reaction was Tallien. It was he who overturned Robespierre, who caused the Reign of Terror to cease, who tore down the scaffolds, who threw



open the prison doors. In the face of the vastness of this public service, his past became obliterated, and France forgot the cruel proconsul who played the tyrant in Bordeaux, one of the promoters of the September massacres, and the regicide. There are sentiments which efface or dominate all others, and such were the feelings of gratitude experienced towards that man.

I saw him, after the rumor of a threatened assassination, and after a few days' disappearance, the reason for which was not thoroughly understood, reappear at the Odéon Theatre. It was known that he was coming, and people were awaiting his arrival. Never was a theatre so filled. The body of the building could not hold the crowd; the stairways were as packed with humanity as the *parterre*. At last he came. What a welcome! What cheering! The occupants of the boxes, of the *parterre*, men and women, all climbed on top of their seats. They could not look at him enough. He was young and rather good-looking, and appeared calm and self-possessed. With him was Mme. Tallien who shared his triumph. In her case, too, everything had been forgotten, and public opinion seemed to have lost all its severity towards her.

Similar demonstrations in their favor were repeated during the whole of the latter part of that year. Never was any service rendered, however great, so well appreciated, and repaid with so lively and touching a gratitude. How was it that such emotional outbursts could ever be forgotten? And yet, during the years preceding his demise (he died in 1820), Tallien dragged along in the most remote corner of a public promenade his melancholy and painful existence. He was eaten up by physical disease, looked hideous and repulsive, lived abandoned and disowned, having, to keep his wretched life together, no one but an old woman who had remained faithful to him, and a miser-



able dole granted to him for pity's sake by the royal government. The reason of all this is that at Quiberon, and on the 13th Vendémiaire, he once more became the Tallien of 1792 and 1793. He was nothing but an unworthy instrument of which Providence had for once deigned to make use for a good end, and which it had allowed to drift back to its perverse nature.

He owed to the remembrance of the 9th Thermidor the only means of subsistence which remained to him, and the permission to reside in France, when all the other regicides were made to leave it. Personally, I was enabled, shortly before his death, to pay my debt of gratitude to him for the good service he had rendered to me as well as to others, and I found real enjoyment in so doing. The pecuniary aid which had been granted to him was stopped, I know not why. I heard of this, and so made good his loss, thus rendering his last hours less painful. While on his death-bed, he let me learn of his gratitude in a most touching fashion.

While final efforts were being made at home to take the power away from the men who had made so shameful a use of it, abroad the state of things had undergone a complete transformation. A new future was unrolling itself before our eyes. It was no longer the nation of 1792, with an army poorly inured to war, with hardly any soldiers. The country's soil had given birth to soldiers. It had lacked officers and generals. War had formed them. Great military talents had sprung up side by side with heroes.

It was no longer an invaded France, with its capital threatened by the enemy. Far from it: Belgium had been subdued, Holland was about to be invaded, and French flags fluttered already on the left bank of the Rhine. The war was still in progress in Vendée. The first years of this insurrection afford perhaps a spectacle unique in history,

that of a blending of ancient virtues with modern social ideas and Christian faith. The Greeks of Leonidas, the soldiers of the Theban legion, and the comrades of Bayard seemed to be marching together under the same flags, in that part of the country. There all was grand, noble, and unsullied, both with regard to the aim in view and the means employed to attain it. It was, in all its sincerity, a war of indignation waged against crime by honor and religion. There, no feeling of personal interest was allowed to make itself manifest. The only ambition known in the camp of men like Bonchamp, Cathelineau, Lescure, and La Rochejaquelein, was to secure the triumph of the most just of causes, to die defending it, to die for country, king, and God.

The victories and defeats of this insurrection have been recorded. Every one has heard of the triumphs and disasters of that heroic Vendée. At the time of which I speak, she appeared to be rising from her ashes, in spite of the last and greatest of her disasters. Her example had brought about, under the form of *chouannerie*, the uprising of Brittany and the surrounding provinces. In that quarter, therefore, rested the hopes of the Royalists, for it was time to abandon those based on the war which was being waged against the stranger.

In the midst of the agitation produced by all these events, we, who had so long been tempest-tossed, were sighing for quiet. The termination of the Reign of Terror, which had given me my liberty, had not restored my property, which had been confiscated under the sentence passed on my father. My wife's fortune was not in a much better condition, and the depreciation of the *assignats* left us almost without resources. Under such circumstances, a residence in Paris could not be thought of. I found a little house at Croissy, near Saint-Germain, and there we settled

down. A few months later, my sister joined us. My mother no longer needed her tender care, for she had passed away, her feeble thread of life having snapped under an illness born of all the sorrows which had harrowed her heart. From that time onwards, my sister remained our faithful companion, and nothing was ever able to separate us.

Happy in my home, I spent more than two years in a kind of retreat, reduced to the strict necessities of life, and cultivating my garden, the produce of which helped us to live. The village of Croissy had been spared the disturbances brought about by the Revolution. No great misfortune had befallen its inhabitants during the time of the Terror, and it owed its tranquil state to a married priest, its former *curé*, who had become its mayor. He was really an excellent man, but his morals were more than easy. Unmindful of his ecclesiastical obligations, he had married, but was trying to obtain the forgiveness of his sin by doing all the good he could. His marriage had, during the most perilous epoch, given him considerable influence.

He was active and courageous, and did not fear exposing himself in order to render a service. His *commune* was consequently a safe place of refuge for any one seeking it, and he had not hesitated to take under his protection one of the best known of clergymen, and consequently one of those most threatened with danger. M. de Pancemont, the former *curé* of Saint-Sulpice, who died bishop of Vannes, lived hidden in a house in the village during the years 1793 and 1794. He was still there when I came. I have known few men who were more saintly. The simplicity of his character would at times cause me to compare him with the well-known character created by the Abbé Prévot, the *doyen* of Kyllerine, whose physical ugliness he shared. In regard to his behavior towards the married *curé* to whom he was under

so great an obligation he displayed admirable delicacy and consideration. He spared no efforts to bring him back into the right path, but forgave him as much as possible, educating his children whom he had baptized, and procuring for them godfathers and godmothers who might take care of them some day and bring them up in the right way. Hence it is that Mme. Pasquier held one of them over the baptismal font, together with M. de Channorier, the principal landowner about Croissy.

The latter also was endowed with a kindliness out of the common. He was well repaid for it by the affection and gratitude of all the residents of the *canton*. He went abroad for a short time, during which his possessions were kept intact for him by the people and by the *curé*.

Our life was therefore cast in pleasant lines among such people, especially after the severe trials through which we had been. We had as a neighbor Mme. de Beauharnais, whose high fortunes we were far from foreseeing. Her house adjoined ours. She no longer came to it but once a week, in order to do the honors of it to Barras, and the number of friends he was wont to bring with him. At early morn we were in the habit of seeing the arrival of baskets full of provisions, shortly afterwards followed by mounted gendarmes patrolling the road from Nanterre to Croissy, for the young *directeur* most frequently came on horseback.

The house of Mme. de Beauharnais displayed, as is somewhat the custom with creoles, a kind of showy luxury. Side by side with the superfluous, there was oftentimes a lack of the most necessary articles. Poultry, game, and rare fruits would be piled up in the kitchen (we were then passing through a time when provisions were very scarce), while, on the other hand, there were not enough saucepans, glasses, or plates, and she borrowed these from our poor little household.

Our intercourse was limited to these neighborly acts, although Mme. Pasquier had met Mme. de Beauharnais prior to the Revolution. We saw more of her sister-in-law, the wife of the eldest of the Beauharnais, and the mother of Mme. de La Valette, whose touching devotion saved the life of her husband during the Revolution. She was an exceedingly distinguished woman, both in intellect and character, and in all respects the superior of her sister-in-law. Her life had always been blameless, in spite of the fickleness of her husband, and, when she was taken to prison, she was one of those women whose noble and courageous attitude was most noticed.

Fate treated the two sisters-in-law in a very different fashion, reserving all its favors for the one, all its slings and arrows for the other. On leaving prison, Mme. de Beauharnais senior, in order to recover a portion of her property (her husband having emigrated), had obtained a divorce, a thing which in those days presented no difficulties for the wives of *émigrés*. She was aided with most touching devotion, in the numberless and difficult steps she had to take in order to protect her interests, by a mulatto, a member of the Convention, who resided in a house belonging to her. She fell in love with him, and committed the folly of marrying him, thus breaking with her whole family.

In later years General Bonaparte interested himself in her daughter, and provided for her education in the establishment which was directed by Mme. Campan. Previous to his departure for Egypt, he married her to his confidential *aide-de-camp*, M. de La Valette. As to Mme. de Beauharnais, she went to dwell with her husband in the south of France, where she died in obscurity and abandoned by all, a few days before the fall of the Empire.

We suffered in our peaceful retreat from the dearth of



provisions, the result, in the first place, of a poor harvest, and especially from the depreciation of the *assignats*, and the disastrous law of the *maximum* (fixing the highest price at which provisions, etc., were to be sold). It is hard to conceive such cares when one has not had to contend with them. France resembled a fortified city after a long siege, when there is a lack of everything at one and the same time. The products of the soil and groceries brought their weight in gold. Even soap was sold at exorbitant prices, and then part of it was clay. The most serious and hardest privation to endure was that of bread. One must have suffered from it in order to conceive the patience required of the unfortunate beings who nevertheless endured it with admirable fortitude.

I cannot pass in silence one of those deeds which, in the course of my life, have been a source of deep and pleasurable emotion. When our distress was at its highest, in spite of the difficulties of transportation, the insensate price of wheat, the sequestration still in force on our Coulans property, and the crushing taxes which our farmers were compelled to pour into the state's coffers, these good people set off with a cartload of the precious cereal. It reached us without hindrance, owing to the numerous precautions they took during the journey, to the care exercised in entering Croissy, and in coming to my house in the dead of the night. They left two hours later, after having, unknown to anybody, piled up the sacks in a well-hidden shed. Fortunately, I dwelt on the outskirts of the village.

## CHAPTER VI

The 13th Vendémiaire—The Convention surrounded by 60,000 men—General Bonaparte—Failure of the uprising owing to the lack of a Royalist leader—The primary assemblies and the new elections—The daughter of Louis XVI. leaves the Temple—The reign of the Directoire—Barras and Mme. Tallien—The kindness of Mme. de Beauharnais—The return of the *émigrés*—The need of enjoyment felt—Mme. de Staël's *salon*—Benjamin Constant—M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs—The 18th Fructidor—Transportation of fallen foes—General Pichegru—Uprisings in Maine and in Brittany—The *chouannerie*—The Treaty of Campo-Formio—General Bonaparte's plans and the Directoire's mistrust—The expedition to Egypt—The Republic of Geneva united to France—Carnot's opinion in this matter—Italy occupied by French troops—State of the finances in 1799—Establishment of the military conscription—The coalition between Austria, England, and Russia—General Suvaroff in Italy—Retreat of the French—An odious act of revenge performed by Barras—Bonaparte's return to France—The men who took part in the 18th Brumaire—Constitution of the Consular Government—Attributes of the three Consuls—Bonaparte's feelings towards the *émigrés*—The infernal machine—Georges Cadoudal and Saint-Réjant, his emissary.

THE 13th Vendémiaire came to trouble our peaceful existence. Paris gave the signal, which was answered by the whole of France. The Revolution was about to be attacked in its stronghold, and to be defeated in the very city where it had found its principal force, where lay the machinery of its government, and where a defeat spelt absolute ruin. One victorious day in Paris would prove more decisive than many battles on the banks of the Rhine.

I was in the thick of this upheaval of the 13th Vendémiaire. I had thrown all my energies into the primary

assembly held at Le Pecq, I had invoked there the language of independence and the principles of liberty, for we had the advantage of having them on our side in fighting the Convention. The question at issue was the carrying into effect of the new constitution, called the Constitution of the Year III. The Convention had decided that the renewal of its membership should be carried out gradually, by the going out and the coming in of a third of its members in each succeeding year. It showed itself in that more astute than the Constituent Assembly, which had sought to lay down that none of its members should be again eligible.

The primary assembly at Le Pecq protested strongly against this decision. This was partly my work, and so I was entrusted with laying its wishes before the cantonal assembly of Saint-Germain, and then before the *sections* of Paris. This mission took me to town three days before the fight, and I left just after seeing it begin, in other words lost, so short was its duration. I was never in a better position to realize to what a degree the best and strongest positions can become useless, when there is no one present with sufficient brains to take advantage of them. I had come to Paris, imbued, like so many others, with the conviction that a strong hand was directing the movement. But what did we find? Nothing but a crowd animated by the best and most courageous intentions, together with a number of prattlers in the tribunes of the *sections*. All were bestirring themselves, urged on by a common sentiment, each one asking of the other: "What must be done? When are we to act?"

At least 60,000 men of the National Guard were provided with arms. All the surrounding towns were prepared to come to their rescue, but where was the general of this army? What name inspiring authority could we bring forward? If but a Bonchamp or a La Rochejaquelein had

appeared on the scene! Had one even been sure of any general who had served with distinction in the republican army! Villot, for instance, would have more than sufficed, and then, it would have been all over with the Convention. But who turned up at the eleventh hour? A M. Danican, who had sprung from nowhere, whose name had remained unspoken up to that moment, whose public life began and ended on that day. Who appointed him? I never could understand nor find out. What I did see plainly was his complete inaction and his deplorable incapacity.

During the morning of the 13th the Convention, surrounded by 60,000 Parisian bayonets, no longer reigned except over the château and the garden of the Tuileries. Discord was in its ranks, and, moreover, we had in its midst partisans, whose presence, although in a minority, was none the less precious. At its disposal were only some three or four thousand men, commanded, it is true, by General Bonaparte, but at whose back, in spite of all contrary belief, the rest of the French army did not stand. The army was not taking any hand in the event, a fortunate circumstance which was not repeated, for, from that day and as a result of it, the army and its generals began to take a part in home affairs, not to relinquish their interference for some time to come.

When to this circumstance is added the fact that the greater number of interests which were later to render so difficult the coming to any arrangement had not yet sprung up; that the greater part of the possessions of the *émigrés* had not been sold; that those which had been paid for with *assignats* at the time of their greatest depreciation, were still held by their original purchasers, it is hard to say what must cause the most astonishment, the blindness, the carelessness, or the incapacity which allowed so good an opportunity to escape. At five o'clock in the evening, the

opportunity had slipped past. A few cannon shots fired against the steps of Saint-Roch had been sufficient to settle the question.

I left at six o'clock, and went to Saint-Germain, to bring my friends the first news of the disaster. I met, when near Courbevoie, the battalions of the National Guard of that city going to the rescue of that of Paris. There was nothing left for them but to turn back. People soon became as terrified as they had been hopeful. They expected a renewal of the Reign of Terror, and their fears were only too well justified by a step taken in the hour of danger, by the ringleaders of the Convention. They opened the prison doors to the most violent revolutionists, whom it had been necessary to keep under lock and key for some months past, in order to restrain their fury and render vain the plots which they had on several occasions fomented. Yet, the results of that day were not as serious as might have been expected. The victors apparently scented the danger of abusing their success. They could not help being struck with the almost unanimous feeling which was revealed against them. Besides, the new elections were close at hand, and the electors chosen in the primary assemblies left no room for doubting that at the very least a spirit of moderation would animate the new third of the members.

Nothing, indeed, will better illustrate the spirit governing the electoral assemblies than the remarkable fact that M. Boissy d'Anglas, the most important and honored member of the party of moderation in the Convention, the man who had distinguished himself by a motion to restore the property of those who had been sentenced to death, was re-elected by at least four-fifths of the departments.

The electoral college to which I belonged met at Versailles. It was three days before there were enough of us present, and when the time came for us to choose our



representatives, great was our embarrassment. No one dared to present the names which had been put forward a few days before. Had things taken a different course on the 13th, I might probably have been among those elected. In spite of this mishap, I was still in a position to exercise a somewhat marked influence, of which I made use to bring forward the names of men open to less suspicion than myself, but who might nevertheless be of service in presenting our views. I contributed to the election of Messieurs Lebrun and Tronçon-Ducoudray, and so was instrumental in sending the one to die at Sinnamary, while I opened for the other the road to honors, power, and riches.

After the 13th Vendémiaire and the disastrous expedition of Quiberon, came the régime of the Directoire, such as established by the new constitution. Many people saw in the creation of two Councils a balance of power which would prove a safeguard against the storms and excesses of a solitary assembly. People were in so great a need of rest that they hailed with joy anything that might resemble a shelter. This faith was not deceived as cruelly as it deserved to be.

The Directoire was installed on the 1st of November, and on the 19th every heart that was truly French was really gladdened. Negotiations long carried on came to a happy conclusion. The daughter of Louis XVI. was allowed to leave the Temple, and was escorted to the frontier, to be exchanged against prisoners who in various ways had fallen into the hands of Austria, which had kept them in strict seclusion in some of its fortresses. They were the *conventionnels* Le Camus, Quinette, Lamarque, and Bancal, whom Dumouriez had handed over at the time of his defection; Messieurs de Sémonville and Maret, arrested on the borders of the Tyrol and of Italy, as they were proceeding as ambassadors of the French Republic, the one to Naples,

the other to Constantinople. The exchange took place at Bâle.

Up to that time, the princess had not much reason to be pleased with the behavior of her relations of the House of Austria. When it came to taking leave of the persons who had accompanied her from Paris, the idea of finding herself handed completely over to strangers became painful to her, and her heart, which had remained French, was painfully rent with the idea that she was about to leave her own country, probably forever.

This act of justice and humanity, which was so long in coming, produced a good impression. But the Directoire knew not how to persevere in the path which this happy beginning seemed to open for it. It occasionally showed itself cruel, and oftentimes ridiculous and corrupt.

Barras was its sovereign, while Mme. Tallien and several other women did the honors of it. It was in the *Salon* of the Directoire that Mme. de Beauharnais laid the foundation of her high fortunes. There she met General Bonaparte. It would not be fair not to admit that the choice he made of that woman was a happy one. At the very outset of her career, she showed herself, such as she was ever in the future, gentle, kind, compassionate, and helpful. No sooner did she have any influence, than she made use of it to render aid to and to defend those who were in distress.

It was mostly the *émigrés* who were in the habit of availing themselves of her generosity and of her zeal, whether it was that they sought to escape a military commission, or help in their efforts to have their names erased from the list of *émigrés*, and have their estates restored to them. It was the time when they began to flock home, having almost all of them exhausted their resources, or being unable to endure any longer their aversion of owing to strangers the mainstay of their existence. The hope of still finding

some slight remnants of their fortune, of securing some inheritance, the desire of seeing their own people and their country, made them run all the risks attendant on their return. It is true that these dangers became less every day, for there was a concerted union of efforts to put an end to their pitiful and painful position. The flocking of the *émigrés* to Paris was noticeable to a degree. The thirst for pleasure which reigned then was one of the characteristics of the time. I am far from justifying it, and yet it entered perhaps into the natural order of things more than is generally believed. It was not all improvidence and giddiness; there existed also the necessity of a little of that relaxation which it is absolutely necessary for human beings to enjoy, especially after emerging from trials so hard and of so long a duration.

Nothing to-day remains unknown or mysterious in connection with the 18th Fructidor. It may nevertheless be appropriate to devote some attention to the part played therein by a certain number of liberty's friends to whom I shall have to recur pretty frequently in the course of my narrative. They deplored the aberration of which France had been the victim since the 10th of August, but the reaction which was inclining minds to the idea of arbitrary power was to them a cause for alarm. In their eyes the return of the régime which had preceded 1789 was fraught with the greatest perils, and they enjoyed sufficient perspicacity to believe that such a return was among the probabilities, should the party of moderation be in the ascendant.

The *hôtel* of Mme. de Staël was the place of rendezvous of those holding this opinion, whose most talented advocate was M. Benjamin Constant, while it had as its prop in the government M. de Talleyrand, who had just been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs through Mme. de Staël's influ-

ence over Barras. He was one of those who most feared the return of the Bourbons, aware as he was that his past precluded the idea of his ever being forgiven by them.

This little coterie (this gathering can hardly be dignified with any other appellation) enjoyed a somewhat important influence. It helped to spur the Directoire on, and to hasten its decisions. It is true that after the perpetration of the 18th Fructidor, it protested against its consequences. It had prayed for the day, but not for what was to happen on the one succeeding it. I must make an exception of M. de Talleyrand in this connection. He was not the man to indulge in such silly visions, and to believe that when one had once trampled on sacred rights, one could place them on a pedestal next day, and then defy their resurrection.

The Directoire proved itself more consistent than the *salon* of Mme. de Staël. Yet, owing to the moderation then prevailing in revolutionary methods, it transported its fallen foes, instead of sending them to the scaffold, trusting to the deserts of Sinnamary to put an end to their existence. General Pichegru, the conqueror of Holland, was sent to those inhospitable shores, together with his colleagues, to expiate his mad confidence, and so he disappeared from the scene of politics, to return to it only to meet with a tragic end. No more painful recollection haunted him probably during the term of his dreadful exile, than that of the weakness of Moreau, who had succeeded him in the command of his army, and who, without any respect for his own glory, was not ashamed, after the 18th Fructidor, to disown his former chief, and to supply his enemies with the proofs of his counter-revolutionary plans. They were but too plainly set forth in a correspondence which had been seized in the baggage-wagon of an Austrian general, and which Moreau forwarded to the Directoire.

I was no longer in Paris, nor in its neighborhood, at the

time of the 18th Fructidor. A month before I had left my place of residence in Croissy to go and live in the province in which were my estates, which had just been restored to me. On quitting the capital, I left the different parties in face of each other, but I did not carry away with me any hope for the success of the Royalist party, to which I belonged. The faith of my friends had this time not proved contagious, as it had at the time of the 13th Vendémiaire. I could perceive only too clearly, in spite of a few seductive appearances, our positive weakness and the strength of our enemies, and so I heard of the result without surprise.

This second period of the Directoire's régime proved much harder for it to weather than the first. The Department of the Sarthe, where I had come to dwell, and which formed part of the former province of Maine, was one of those which attained great importance through the civil war of the West. The town of Le Mans had been the scene of a pitched battle, which resulted in the almost total destruction of the Vendean army, after it had crossed the Loire. The country did not take any part in the insurrection, and the Vendéans gathered few partisans while passing through it. They met with the same reception throughout nearly the whole of Brittany, which, like Maine, was only to rise in insurrection six months later, after these two provinces had allowed the Vendean army to be crushed without in any way coming to its help. The absolute lack of a common leadership was cause that the Royalist party failed to gain any striking advantage, and paralyzed the most courageous and the most generous efforts.

Moreover, the uprising of the Departments of Brittany and of Maine was of an entirely different nature from that of the Vendée. No large armed bodies ever came into existence. There were merely a number of little bands which would meet at a given signal, now in one direction,



and again in another. Such a system could not engender any decisive results; but, on the other hand, it was hard to overtake and to crush out the insurgents. These little bands had each their own leaders, each one independent of the other, and they were as hard to manage as to put to fighting purposes. This is what has been designated as the *chouannerie*.

Upon my arrival home, a patched-up peace was concluded between the chouans and the Republic. The neighborhood was still suffering from the presence of a few irregular bands, which had taken to habits of brigandage, rather than to fighting. They pretended not to have heard of any conclusion of peace, and, from time to time, they would attack stage-coaches, and spread terror in the rural districts.

A fresh importance was given to them by the 18th Fructidor, and a secret undercurrent soon made itself felt. It was an entirely novel spectacle, the one afforded by that portion of France which dared to show a bold front to the Revolution, which forced it to compromise in spite of its victories, and where, as a result, people had contracted and preserved a liberty of thought and speech unknown elsewhere. It was in the nature of a surprise for all those, who, like myself, had spent all the years of the Revolution in Paris, and in localities where it had always been able to enforce obedience. Here the conquered ones still showed a noble pride and independence, and defeats were titles to honor even in the eyes of the victors. How often did I not listen with pleasure to the narrative of the battle of Le Mans, and of the exploits of the brave and high-minded La Rochejaquelein, whose name was on everybody's lips!

What a sight it was for me to look upon those country districts which I had left in a state of peace, where no fight had been waged up to that time for over two centuries, and which I now saw covered with graves hardly closed!

In all directions, even in my park, and in the farmyards, was I shown the resting-places of these Vendean peasants, who proved such admirable models of a courage, of a fidelity, of a resignation of which history cannot but ever preserve the recollection. There is no doubt that the battle-fields of a civil war inspire one with feelings hitherto unknown. The lessons they inculcate are of a deeper and more solemn nature than any others. The fallen ones whom one mourns have in them something great, dark, and terrible. The tears shed over them have a bitterness of their own, and time can hardly wipe out these sorrowful impressions.

The country's state of exhaustion was indeed great. The losses, especially of men of note capable of exercising great influence and of commanding a following, had been numerous, and of too recent occurrence to countenance the fear of a new uprising of any strength, nor was such an uprising to be desired, for it could not contribute to the success of the Royalist cause, and would, of necessity, give birth to much useless misery.

Not the slightest illusion could be indulged in after the fatal results of the last appeal to arms made by Charette and Stofflet and after the Quiberon disaster. A few leaders of minor rank still labored, if not to bring about an uprising, at least to create a belief in one. They thus hoped to increase their own importance. There was no lack of encouragement from abroad, and secret communications found their way from British shores, urging a renewal of the civil war in the provinces of the West, a war to which so little assistance had been furnished, and from which no advantage had been derived, when so much might have resulted from it. The Vendean and Breton peasantry, whom there had been attempts to drive to insurrection from time to time, and the unfortunate members of the gentry, which the London cabinet sent for the fourth and fifth time on

the shores of Poitou or of Brittany, had deserved well enough of the king's cause not to be so lightly sent to slaughter.

These uprisings became a pretext for acts of coercion. During the month following the 18th Fructidor, and upon a rumor of Royalist movements in a certain number of departments, the banishment of all the nobles and the confiscation of their properties was resolved upon. In lieu of the latter, they were to receive a peddler's bundle, with which they were to be driven across the frontier.

Already were the *émigrés*, who had returned in great numbers during the preceding months, compelled to seek safety in flight once more, under the penalty of seeing the unrepealed blood laws affecting them enforced. Nothing could be more insensate than this latest motion against the nobility, and yet it emanated from a committee the principal figure of which was the celebrated Abbé Sieyès. It was he who, during the reign of the Constituent Assembly, at the time of the seizure of the clergy's possessions, had exclaimed: "They seek to become free, when they do not even understand the meaning of equity!" Still, he had not dared to undertake drawing up the report, so this duty devolved upon M. Boulay, the newly elected representative of the Department of the Meurthe. It was all the more surprising to see him undertake such a mission, from the fact that he had joined the Assembly with an honorable reputation, and that he had not bound himself by any engagement to the party of the Revolution. Great was the fright caused thereby.

On being informed of what was about to happen, I went to Paris, for the purpose of procuring some little funds, so that if it became necessary for me to leave France, I should, at least in the beginning, not feel the pangs of distress. Three weeks later the motion was finally rejected.

A great and fortunate event had happened across the frontier. General Bonaparte had signed a treaty of peace with Austria at Campo-Formio. Uniting in himself the powers of both negotiator and general, he had made free use of both, and had paid as little heed to the express commands of the Directoire with regard to the bases and terms of the treaty, as to its directions for the carrying out of the campaign.

His mind had, for some time back, dwelt on the idea of destroying the ancient Republic of Venice, and he had taken from what remained of it sufficient to compensate Austria for its final cession of the Netherlands to France, and of the districts of Milan and Mantua, and the duchy of Modena to the Cisalpine Republic, which was erected into an independent State. Austria bound itself not to raise any obstacles to France's frontier, which was to include Mayence which she had not then occupied, being extended to the banks of the Rhine. The last named agreement could, however, only be ratified finally with the Germanic Empire, and to that effect a congress was called at Rastadt in Suabia. This was, with but one slight exception, almost the conclusion of a continental peace, for England alone remained in arms. The Directoire had so willed it, for it had as early as the 18th of September hastened to break off the negotiations carried on for several months past at Lille with Lord Malmesbury, England's plenipotentiary.

Bonaparte was appointed plenipotentiary to the Rastadt congress, that he might bring to an issue the work of pacification which he had wrought so far. He went there, on leaving Italy, but hardly did more than put in an appearance. The high and imperious position which he had already taken, would not have allowed him to follow with the necessary moderation, the painfully fastidious discussions which were bound to occur in an assembly of

Germanic plenipotentiaries. He left his colleagues to do the work, and hastened back to Paris.

The Directoire welcomed him with a gratitude that was feigned, and did its best to dissemble, under the outward appearance of the highest admiration, and of a confidence without limits, the vexation so strong a position inspired it with. Italy's conqueror was immediately assigned to the command of the troops which were supposed to be gathering by the ocean side, and the aggregation of which was to take the name of "army against England." This constituted the first recorded threat of landing troops on the British coast, for the abortive expedition of General Hoche on the Irish coast cannot be viewed from this standpoint.

The general was presented to the Directoire in the courtyard of the Petit Luxembourg, where an *autel de la patrie* had been erected. He was introduced to the five Directors by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. de Talleyrand, who took occasion to deliver a speech wherein, honoring in Bonaparte "his undying love of country and of humanity," he praised "his contempt for luxuriousness and pomp, this miserable ambition of ordinary souls! The day was approaching when it would become necessary to entreat him to tear himself away from the quiet peace of his studious retreat."

It was noticed that General Bonaparte hardly partook of any dish at the dinner which followed this ceremony. This abstinence was attributed to his feeling unwell, but I learnt since from his confidential *aide-de-camp*, M. de La Valette, that Bonaparte had considered this precaution necessary in the face of the dangers which he believed threatened his existence. Whether or not his suspicions were based on any foundation, one cannot but help recording them, for they must have greatly affected the resolution he was about to take.



Winter had hardly set in, when he abandoned the idea of an expedition to England. The almost insurmountable obstacles connected with it could not escape him. Nevertheless, he felt that he must not suffer the public enthusiasm, of which he was the object, to cool off.

The Directoire mistrusted and hated him. Of that, he could not entertain any doubts. The Directoire was capable of anything; he knew that also, so there was nothing better for him to do but to remove himself, at least for a short while. In view of his plans for the future, was he not gaining a great advantage by abandoning this wretched government to itself? The measure of its follies was not yet full. So he again turned his thoughts towards an expedition to Egypt. He had bethought himself of it during the last months he spent in Italy. Of this, there can be no doubt. He had, even in those days, secured sufficient information as to the means for bringing it to a successful issue, and he had, moreover, kept spies at work in the island of Malta. No sooner had he fully made up his mind, than it was an easy matter for him to get the Directoire's consent to the expedition, for it was no less ready to give him the opportunity of leaving, than he was to grasp it. All things were therefore placed at his disposal, preparations were made with a rapidity heretofore without precedent, and with a secrecy one cannot too much admire.

The times were favorable for finding men willing to run great risks in foreign lands, so little was the security promised at home by the government.

General Bonaparte left Toulon by the 19th of May. Who was there, who, with the knowledge of the strength of the English squadrons cruising about, would have dared to say that there was any chance of his succeeding in crossing the Mediterranean? Nelson, it is well known, twice

came very near meeting the expedition, and had he done so, its destruction would have been certain.

War was still going on in Europe at the time General Bonaparte was sailing away from the shores of Provence. Riots which had occurred, or, rather, which had deliberately been fomented in Rome, in the course of which the French ambassadorial residence had been violated, and General Duphot had fallen a victim to the popular frenzy, had furnished the French troops with the impatiently waited for opportunity of advancing on the capital of the Christian world. They entered Rome on the 18th of January, and established a hold on it by occupying the castle of San Angelo. On the 15th of the following month, the Roman Republic was proclaimed, and the Pope, forcibly removed from the Vatican, was carried away into Tuscany, and imprisoned in a *chartreuse*.

France interfered in Switzerland's affairs under the pretext of restoring a tranquillity which had been only disturbed by an insurrection of the Vaudois against the government of Berne, an insurrection clearly fomented by the intrigues of the Directoire. The French troops invaded the Vaud country on the 28th of February, the day in which the union of Mulhouse with France was proclaimed. This was a free city, which formed part of the Swiss Confederation. Fribourg was next taken, after a battle fought on the 2d of March. Berne was occupied on the 9th, after several bloody engagements, and Switzerland's liberty and independence fell together.

It was on this occasion that Carnot, in a pamphlet which he published from the seclusion of his retreat in Germany, wrote this so pithy sentence: "The Directoire sought for the place where it could find the greatest number of free men to kill, and so it pounced on Switzerland." On the 26th of April, the Republic of Geneva became united to France.

General Bonaparte was not as foreign as might be inferred to these deeds, the odium of which he preferred to leave to the Directoire, but which certainly chimed in with his political views and his military combinations. At the time of his passing through Switzerland, on his way to Rastadt, he had spoken a few significant words, which had not escaped his lips unadvisedly. He had expressed discontent with the conduct of the Swiss government during his campaign in Italy. This discontent was the herald of ulterior plans, and might, in case of need, serve as a reason and as an excuse for putting them in execution.

In Italy, the king of Naples unwisely undertook to attack the French troops occupying his kingdom. His army of 40,000 men, commanded by General Mack, was successful for a few days only, during which, it is true, Rome fell into its hands; but it was soon driven out of the city, and ere two months had elapsed French troops were under the walls of Naples, and soon entered the city in triumph.

In northern Italy, the king of Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel, had just succeeded his father Victor Amadeus. Less resigned than his predecessor to France's rigorous methods, he soon afforded the opportunity for suspecting that, together with the king of Naples, he was ready to join the coalition which was doubtless being negotiated between Austria, England, and Russia. He had not long to wait for his chastisement. War was declared against him on the 5th of December, and on the 10th his capital was occupied. Without any other resource left to him but to take refuge at Cagliari, in the island of Sardinia, and wishing to live there in peace, he accepted the terms imposed upon him of ceding to France all his rights over Piedmont.

Thus, by the end of 1798, or in the first days of January, 1799, almost the whole of Italy, from Naples to the Alps, was occupied by the French armies. Their number was not

in proportion with the weight of the burden which they had to carry, nor with the dangers which were about to threaten them unceasingly, for the coalition of which I have foreshadowed the existence could not but fail to act by the time spring came around. Everybody could foresee it, and the Directoire, which had so plainly provoked the formation of this coalition, had to provide the means for resisting it. From a financial point of view, the Directoire's position was exceedingly bad, for it had been compelled, at the beginning of 1798, to have recourse to a forced loan of eighty millions, alleging for that purpose the expenses to be incurred in making preparations for the invasion of England. As regards the military situation, the Directoire was not much better off. The French army, composed exclusively of the men the supply of whom had been furnished through the requisitions of the Convention, had suffered considerable losses during the bloody and lengthy wars it had been through during the past six years. It was therefore greatly diminished in numbers, and besides, General Bonaparte had just taken with him the best part of it, what might be considered its *élite*. Moreover, there was no regular method of recruiting, and it was with the view of filling this void in the legislation, that the establishment of a military conscription, such or almost such as existed to the end of the Empire, was determined upon.

The law creating this institution was passed on the report of General Jourdan. So it happened that the good fortune of Bonaparte should will that the foundation of the military power, which he was soon to raise to so high a degree, should be laid in his absence without the primary severity of the legislation, which was to give birth to it, being laid to his door.

Austria began to act on the offensive during March, and on the 25th of that month, the Archduke Charles won an

important battle over General Jourdan, a short distance from Constance. In order to guard against the consequences of this defeat, the command of the army was given to General Masséna, whose forces joined those already in Switzerland, and who took up his position in the neighborhood of Zurich, maintaining himself in it, and defending it with so much glory. Over in Italy, General Schérer allowed himself to be beaten on the 25th and the 30th of March, under the walls of Verona, by General Kray, who was at the head of 60,000 soldiers.

A few days later, General Suvaroff, with 40,000 Russians, joined this army, and from that date he directed the campaign on behalf of the coalition. He pursued it with the vigor and activity characteristic of him. This first appearance of a new force on the scene of war was one of the most important happenings of the epoch. France had repeatedly been threatened with it, without the threat having been carried into effect, but it was now about to play a most important part.

In face of such overwhelming odds, there was nothing left for the French but to beat a retreat. It was accomplished with difficulty, but it proved less disastrous than it might have been in view of existing conditions, had not General Moreau, who was serving in a kind of volunteer capacity, been with the army. No time was lost in turning over the command to him. He could hardly make good the mistakes of the incapable Schérer, but he succeeded in lessening somewhat their consequences.

During the month of May, Sieyes, on his return from Prussia, took the place of Rewbell in the Directoire; Treillard, Larévellière-Lépeaux, and Merlin of Douay were replaced by Roger-Ducos, an obscure *conventionnel*, by Gohier, the least known of all the magistracy, and lastly, by General Moulin. Barras alone remained out of the first



set. He had latterly signalized himself by an odious act of revenge. There existed in the Palais-Royal a *café*, which was the meeting-place of a number of young men who had little fondness for the Directoire, and whose sarcastic remarks disturbed its peace of mind, whenever they reached its ears. Barras invited a few officers to dinner at his house, and placed them under the orders of Colonel Fournier, one of the worst characters in the army. During the course of the evening, they were led by him to the *café* mentioned. They entered it with drawn swords, and at once began slashing right and left. A number of the habitués were wounded, and among them General Oudinot. He was quietly partaking of ice-cream, and it was doubtless intended that he should be struck. He complained pretty loudly in the beginning against such an outrage, but the affair was stifled, and the criminal deed remained unpunished, for it originated from too high. Oudinot and several of his friends had not lost the memory of it, when later on they helped to overthrow the Directoire.

Anxious to procure at any price the funds of which it stood in pressing need, the Directoire had recourse once more to a forced loan. With regard to the malcontents, and especially the Royalists of the western departments, it flattered itself with containing and repressing them, by causing to be voted a law authorizing it to lay hands on hostages in all localities wherein the slightest disturbance should occur. I narrowly escaped becoming a victim of this law, even before its promulgation.

A commissioner of the Executive had been assassinated in the street of Le Mans by a few chouans, who had been bold enough to enter the city. Thereupon the local authorities sought fit to arrest a few landowners in the surrounding country, who were supposed to favor in a special fashion the Royalist party, with a view of holding them as hostages

for their own safety. As these were signs that these tactics were likely to be renewed frequently, I hastened to return to Paris, happy to be back in it, for, in reality, one was much safer there than anywhere else. This can easily be accounted for. The secret of the weakness of the Directoire was seen all the better at short range. At a distance, it still looked imposing, and the provincial revolutionists did not lack zeal in carrying out its behests. The Paris revolutionists were wiser, and did not care to commit themselves on its behalf.

The Councils (the two Chambers), in spite of the weeding out to which they had been subjected, still contained the elements of a party of moderation which was only seeking an opportunity to shake off its shameful harness. To that party was due the rejecting of the measure proposed by Messieurs Sieyès and Boulay (of the Meurthe) against the nobility. Hence was persecution less harsh in Paris, where an amount of secret protection, which was not without its effect, was to be obtained at times. Meanwhile anarchy was spreading.

The triumphs of the coalition had been put an end to in Switzerland by Masséna, and by Brune in Holland. But, although they had been able to defeat the foreigner, they were not sufficiently strong to overturn the government. To accomplish that end, it was necessary that General Bonaparte should return to France.

Fate led me one evening to the theatre next to a box occupied by two very pretty women who were unknown to me. During the performance a message was brought to them. I noticed that it caused great and joyous commotion. They left, and I soon afterwards learnt that they were the sisters of Bonaparte, and that he had landed on French soil. A courier had brought the news. The effect produced on me by the knowledge of this fact, and on the

greater number of those who received it, simultaneously with me, was in no way proportionate to the consequences which were to follow. We did not at that early date place much reliance upon the views and the intentions of Italy's conqueror, and this was not to be wondered at. He had come under our notice for the first time on the 13th Vendémiaire. To him was greatly due the 18th Fructidor, and the form of government which had come of it.

The expedition to Egypt, which has since spoken so strongly to the imagination, was then hardly looked upon as anything else but a mad undertaking. The destruction of our fleet at Aboukir by Nelson, the siege of a paltry town like St. Jean d'Acre, which he had been compelled to raise, and the information which we had received by way of England, had considerably shorn of their glory the effect of the bulletins from the army of the East. People seemed to see more braggadocio than earnestness in them, and the adventurer apparently predominated over the great general.

What had especially struck people in these bulletins, was a certain declaration of faith in favor of the Mahometan creed, the effect of which, though it might be somewhat great in Egypt, had, in France, only called forth ridicule. I state all this, because a number of people, believing apparently that they were adding to their hero's greatness, have since sought to present him as ardently and impatiently expected. I am of the opinion that they have not spoken truly, while deceiving themselves with regard to the effect which they have sought to produce. To my mind, Bonaparte is far greater, when he is considered as arriving when no one expects him or dreams of him, when he faces the disadvantages of a return bearing resemblance to a flight, when he triumphs over the prejudices which this return raises against him, and when in the space of a month he lays hand on every form of power. He is far greater,

I maintain, when surrounded by all the obstacles he has triumphed over, than when an attempt is made to present him as the cynosure of all eyes, and having but to come forward to become lord of all.

Owing to the very natural lack of resolve on the part of the Directoire, to whom, moreover, little time was vouchsafed wherein to come to any fixed purpose, Bonaparte reached Paris at the same time as the news of his landing. From that very moment his behavior showed prodigious cleverness. In the first place he knew sufficiently how to keep all the parties in so uncertain a state with regard to his plans, that although something important was expected to happen, everything connected with it remained unknown up to the very last moment.

He put into application the method he so often made use of afterwards, and which no one perhaps has ever better put into practice, that of making the most opposite opinions unite and march together to his own goal. Thus, with the exception of the Royalists, none of whom had yet joined forces with him, and a few Revolutionists who had been abandoned by their principal leaders, all those who had been prominent in public life since the death of the Constituent Assembly helped to bring about the 18th Brumaire; in other words, those who had made the 18th Fructidor, and those who had submitted to it. The army of the Rhine and the army of Italy, both so jealous of each other, followed the same road towards the goal and kept step together. Generals Jourdan and Bernadotte, among those whose names were known to fame, were the only ones who held aloof. The former was held back by his republican principles; the latter, by his personal ambitious views.

Sieyès came to the rescue, and with him Roger-Ducos, of whom he could dispose as he saw fit. Sieyès was the principal dupe on the eventful day. He did not see that

his metaphysics were about to vanish in the presence of the practical genius of the general.

The indecision of Barras, or rather Bonaparte's shrewdness in creating and fostering it, ridded him of a man who would have claimed first rank, but who had become so debased that any contact with him was in itself compromising. Barras was allowed to keep the money he had stolen, and it may be that more was given to him. He was fortunate enough to lead a peaceful and obscure life, following upon the highest position, and he apparently found in the enjoyment of such an existence some compensation for the power he had lost. In such a wise did this man live through the consular and the imperial régime, which transmitted him to the royal government such as it had found him.

The men most taken into the confidence of General Bonaparte, and who were best informed as to his plans during the days preceding the 18th Brumaire, were, besides his brother Lucien, Messieurs Rœderer, Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, Cambacérès, and Talleyrand. In addition to these, some hundred and fifty men at least were initiated into his secrets, to a higher or lesser degree. In spite of this, the Directoire was taken unawares. The military guard of the Directoire took sides against it, without its president (Gohier) entertaining the least suspicion of this defection. This guard, composed of an infantry regiment which had belonged to the army of Italy, and of a cavalry regiment commanded by the Corsican Sébastiani, formed the nucleus of the military forces Bonaparte could dispose of, and ensured the success of his enterprise.

General Lefèvre, who was in command of the Paris garrison, went over to him unreservedly. This service was never forgotten, and the recollection of it is to be found during the brilliant period when Napoleon distributed



among his adherents so many of the batons of a Marshal of France. Many accessions to fortune, among those which occurred during the Consulate and the Empire, are to be explained in the same fashion, and their foundations rest upon claims to gratitude dating from the same epoch. Whether as First Consul or as Emperor, Bonaparte ever showed his gratitude in this respect.

It is unnecessary to dwell to any extent on the scenes of the 18th and 19th Brumaire (November 10th and 11th, 1799). They have been so often told, and no one can have forgotten General Bonaparte's apostrophe, on the 18th, to the partisans of the Directoire, as spoken to an emissary of Barras: "What have you done with that land of France which I left to your care in so magnificent a condition? I bequeathed you peace, and on my return I find war. I left you the memory of victories, and now I have come back to face defeats. I left with you the millions I had gathered in Italy, and to-day I see nothing in every direction but laws despoiling the people, coupled with distress. What have you done with the one hundred thousand French citizens, my companions in glory, all of whom I knew? You have sent them to their death. This state of things cannot last, for it would lead us to despotism. We require liberty reposing on the basis of equality."

It is a known fact, that on the 19th, at Saint-Cloud, the firmness of General Bonaparte, so often tested in the battlefield, was for a moment shaken by the vociferous yells with which he was greeted by the Conseil des Cinq-Cents, and in the face of which he deemed it prudent to beat a retreat. His brother Lucien was the president of this Council, and the firmness of the parliamentarian was in this instance more enduring than that of the warrior. Lucien weathered the storm, and prevented the passing of a decree of outlawry. Bonaparte soon returned, supported by a military escort

commanded by Generals Murat and Leclerc. The soldiers had been electrified by a rumor that the life of Bonaparte had been attempted in the chamber of the Council. The appearance and the attitude of this faithful armed band quickly cut the Gordian knot. The chamber was soon evacuated, and many of the members of the Council, anxious to take the shortest road, fled by the windows.

So Bonaparte remained master of the situation by means of a method bearing some resemblance to that put in use by Cromwell to rid himself of the Long Parliament. Still, the French general preserved a greater respect for the appearances than his forerunner, and he took care to shelter himself behind a semblance of legality.

The *Conseil des Anciens*, which was, almost to a man, on his side, and the remnants of the Council which the sight of bayonets had sufficed to disperse, met at Saint-Cloud the same night. The result of the deliberations of that night in the two Councils was the abolition of the Directoire, the expulsion of seventy-two members belonging to the overthrown party in the two Councils, the establishing of a provisional government composed of three consuls, and, lastly, the adjournment of the Councils till the 23d of January following. A legislative commission of fifty members was appointed to act *ad interim*.

The three provisional consuls were Sieyès and Roger-Ducos of the Directoire, and General Bonaparte. This provisional state of government lasted only six weeks, during which the consuls and the Legislative Commission prepared and drew up the France's Constitution. This was the fourth in ten years. It was promulgated on the 24th of December, and is known as the Constitution of the Year VIII. Its result was to establish the consular government.

A new era dawned for France with this form of government. The face of things was entirely changed, and

everything began to tend to a new goal. The powers of the clubs, and of deliberative assemblies, was succeeded by the most absolute authority placed in the hands of one man. Thus, with but slight shades of distinction, will the march of events ever progress henceforth, and one form of excess will ever call forth its very opposite.

Nevertheless, absolute power, however much it was prayed for, did not become firmly established without encountering serious obstacles. Bonaparte's first footsteps were remarkable for the prudence, the sagacity, and the talent he displayed. At the outset, he merely devoted his attention to indispensable matters, planting stakes along the road he was to travel, and thus making it more secure.

His consular government was, in the first place, organized in such a fashion as to break up as much as possible the revolutionary framework. His good fortune willed that the ideology of Sieyès, which ever and ever gave birth to new combinations, should render him most valuable aid in this undertaking. Thus, the power of the deliberative assemblies, already shorn of much of its strength by the creation of the two Councils which had taken the place of the Convention, was still more circumscribed by being divided into three parts. The first was composed of life members whose deliberations were held in secret. The second, which was elective, and renewed in part every year, was doomed to silence. The third was likewise elective, but was allowed the mere freedom of speech and the making public of its debates. It was free to give advice, but its vote was never taken into consideration. It was evident that this third branch was a mere *hors-d'œuvre*, and that when it should be in the way, it could be done away with, without any indispensable component part of the machinery being cut off.

A noteworthy fact is the so readily established accord

among all those who took a share in the organization of the representative branch of the government. Nothing demonstrates better to what a degree the excesses of these assemblies, notably the Legislative Assembly and the Convention, had terrified the public mind, and how a return to such excesses was dreaded. Equally unanimous was the resolve to put a curb on popular elections. Nothing better could be devised to that end than the primary assemblies, the cantonal assemblies, the electoral colleges in the departments and in the *arrondissements*, whose power was limited to designating a certain number of candidates, from which the life body known as the *Sénat conservateur* made a selection.

And so all this was conceived and adopted without straining by Sieyès and by all the ardent friends of liberty. The same was not to occur when it came to establishing the basis of what was called the executive power. This was the rock upon which Sieyès and Bonaparte split, but, as a matter of course, the general gained his point. There was not, as Sieyès wished for, either a great elector, or two or three consuls placed on an equal footing. The result was, after all, a first, a second, and a third consul, Bonaparte naturally getting the highest rank. Sieyès having declared that the position of second or third consul was not to his liking, Bonaparte was little troubled at his repugnance, and chose for himself two more practical and more accommodating colleagues.

The Abbé Sieyès therefore entered quietly into the *Sénat conservateur*, and finally lost all importance and consideration by his acceptance, as the price of his "valuable services," of the national estate of Crosne, which gave rise to the following rather merry lines: —

Sieyès à Bonaparte a fait présent du trône,  
Sous un pompeux débris croyant l'ensevelir ;  
Bonaparte à Sieyès a fait présent de Crosne  
Pour le payer et l'avilir !

The attributes of the three consuls were as follows: to Cambacérès was given the direction of all legislative work, while Lebrun took charge of the financial administration. As to the First Consul, he scrupled not to declare openly that he reserved unto himself everything proper to the exercise of the executive power, all things relating to the army and to war, adding thereto, as a necessary consequence, he said, all things pertaining to foreign relations.

The formation and the organization of the Council of State was next taken up, and Bonaparte succeeded in embodying in it all those whose useful talents in every direction, and especially in the civil service, had come to the fore through the Revolution. This Council was the mainspring of the administration of the First Consul and of the Emperor. It contributed, in a powerful degree, to France's home organization. Moreover, the methods and ways of this branch of the administration, when set in motion in the countries which the fortunes of war united shortly afterwards to the Empire, had such happy results in almost all localities wherein they were put into force, that they oftentimes caused the ills following upon conquest to be forgotten.

Matters which since 1789 had been submitted to collective deliberation, were left to the decision of a single individual. Administration by department and by *arrondissement* became administration by prefect and by sub-prefect.

The consequences of such a change were of great import. The principle of unity of action in the midst of all territorial divisions, responsibility well defined and reascending up to the supreme head itself, promptly restored order in the government. At first, this all-important result was far from being grasped and appreciated as it should have been. It was the democratic principle sapped at its very root, and, from the outset, the undoing of the work of the Constit-



uent Assembly. The Assembly's efforts had all tended to diminish authority, to weaken supreme power, while, under the new order of things, this power was actually re-established.

What gave the greatest pleasure was the disappearance of a number of petty officials, who were both worthless and incapable, and at whose mercy the administration of departments and *arrondissements* had been for the past ten years. They were all the more inclined to make the weight of their authority felt, because they had almost all of them sprung from the lowliest strata of society. People found it to their advantage to have to deal with but a single representative of the central power, whose interest it would be to possess the esteem of those he governed, in order to be able to retain his important position. Moreover the creation of councils, for the departments and for the *arrondissements*, had shown some consideration for the collective needs of local interests, and this concession was considered sufficient.

The new government did yet another thing, the grandest perhaps under the circumstances surrounding it, the credit for which belongs entirely to Bonaparte. It forgot the past, and announced that its only enemies would be those who were so of their own seeking. This resolve was carried out in the choice of the men called upon to fill the numerous offices which were at the government's disposal, those of prefects, sub-prefects, prefectural councillors, members of the *Tribunat*, of the *Corps législatif*, of the Council of State, and of the *Sénat conservateur*.

Bonaparte had a peace of his own to make with the victims of Fructidor, and it cost him next to nothing. The decrees of transportation were repealed, and those of the exiles of Sinnamary who still survived were permitted to see their native country once more. Had Pichegru's escape

not taken place before the amnesty, he would doubtless have been allowed to return with his comrades in misfortune, with M. de Marbois, for instance, and he might have later commanded an army in Germany at the very time M. de Marbois was at the head of the Treasury Department.

The case of the *émigrés*, owing to their devotion to the House of Bourbon, was a harder one to dispose of than that of the *fructidorisés*. The First Consul felt no hatred towards them, for he never experienced any hatred or affection not dictated to him by his self-interest, and his present interest was plainly that of drying up this source of all internal dissensions, and of depriving the foreigner of auxiliaries who continually furnished him with more or less dangerous communications and intelligence at home.

It had already been noticed that during his Italian campaigns, he had shown no severity to the *émigrés* who had fallen into his hands, and his friendly disposition towards them could not have undergone any change. He gave proof of this, first by causing all vexatious processes being carried on against them to be stopped, and next by favoring the erasure of their names from the proscribed list, and the restitution of their estates to them, in cases where these had not been sold.

Mme. Bonaparte showed herself from the outset an easily approachable and active intermediary in the matter of petitions of this kind. Her kind heart naturally inclined her to this, and it well suited the policy of her husband that he should appear as yielding to her influence in these matters.

It was for him a means of giving satisfaction to many interests, of toning down many angry feelings, and of acquiring friends throughout the length and breadth of France. It was principally in the western provinces that the satisfaction thus given became a powerful factor towards definitely ensuring their pacification. Yet, side by side

with the advantage to be derived from this conduct, Bonaparte had to beware of disturbing the purchasers of estates sold under the Revolution. They were numerous, strong, powerful, and otherwise to be feared than the *émigrés*. But if there was an art in which he excelled, it was that of combining the measure of satisfaction to be granted to each one, and of fairly balancing clashing interests. The purchasers of estates found the safest of guarantees in the numerous persons interested in defending them, and who formed part of the government.

The most rabid revolutionists, the regicides themselves, had their guarantee in the Council of State, by the presence in it of men like Merlin, Berlier, Réal, and Boulay, and even in the Ministry, in the person of M. Fouché, Minister of Police.

The presence of Second Consul Cambacérès instilled confidence into the minds of the clever and laborious men of business who had made their way during the Revolution into the mind of the new magistracy, and also to some extent into that of the old, of which he had been a member, and for whom he never disguised his esteem and even his feelings of sympathy.

There remained, in these early days, but one interest concerning which no one had so far pronounced any intentions, the one affecting religious worship and the clergy. But there could hardly be any doubt that the general, who by his treaty of Tolentino with the Pope, had shown the importance which he attached to spiritual influence, did not still more bear it in mind at a time when it could be of such material help to him. In nothing, after all, did his prudence and cleverness so reveal themselves as in this connection.

Over and above the political views which were soon to direct his attention towards everything relating to ecclesi-

astical affairs, his mind was harboring secret aspirations. His heart preserved in its recesses a few old feelings which it had probably imbibed in the first years of his childhood, which made themselves felt on several important occasions in his career, and on which the last hours of his life shed no uncertain light.

A few months after the treaty of Campo-Formio, his sister Pauline, the wife of General Leclerc, and who since became Princess Borghese, was confined at Milan, the chief town of the Cisalpine Republic. The ceremony of registering the birth of the child took place with great pomp at Government House, but the christening had previously taken place in a church belonging to members of the Capuchin Order who had not sworn fidelity to the Republic. The child had been taken there on the previous evening, and with it went Messieurs de Sémonville and Dufresne de Saint-Léon, who had been chosen to act as witnesses. Everything took place in accordance with the formal orders of General Bonaparte, who sent them from Paris.

As a matter of course the army became the object of his most serious attention. One might have thought that it would be content with having at last a general at the head of the government, and yet it was in its ranks that was to be found the greatest number of malcontents. It was unavoidable that so elevated a fortune should not excite the envy of the other generals, all inclined to believe themselves of equal merit with the fortunate First Consul. General Moreau was in the first rank of the malcontents.

In spite of these hostile sentiments, more or less dissembled, and in the midst of difficulties without number, Bonaparte had to set in motion all France's military resources, in order to give back to its arms the superiority which if, since his departure for Egypt, they had not altogether lost, they had at any rate allowed to fall into

question. He soon made up his mind to undertake everything to be able to take the offensive once more, and to maintain his rights to the nation's confidence, by winning fresh victories. The prestige of military glory had alone elevated him to his present position, and was alone capable of making it more secure. He gave out the various commands with great sagacity, gave apparently to Moreau the most important one of all, and soon after showed, by winning the battle of Marengo, that decisive events ever occur where the superior man is in command.

What it least becomes me to do, is to write the history of battles, so I do not dwell on this brilliant feat and on that of Hohenlinden.

I saw Bonaparte's return to Paris after the battle of Marengo. I was at the Tuileries an hour after his arrival, at the very moment when he showed himself at the window of his study to acknowledge the cheering. The day was one of the finest of a dying-out spring. Enthusiasm was at its height, and deservedly so. The results secured were so great, and seemed to render our future secure. We could now hope to see the completion of all the beneficial work begun on the 18th Brumaire. What strength did not victory give to the man who had had but to show himself to reconquer Italy in a day! Who could henceforth stand in the way of his will?

The battle of Hohenlinden won by Moreau within sixty leagues of Vienna, after a campaign in which the talents of that general had been made manifest in a brilliant fashion, but completed the work accomplished at the battle of Marengo, and Austria was glad to accept a peace on the terms proposed, and which were signed at Lunéville.

Meanwhile, the First Consul cleverly succeeded, by flattering the self-love of the Emperor Paul, in separating him from England, and thus transformed into an alliance to his



advantage the enmity which had existed from the beginning of the Revolution between France and the great northern power. To crown all, he signed a concordat with the Holy See, and, at home, foiled many schemes antagonistic to him. But he also ran great dangers which his good fortune, if not his shrewdness, saved him from.

The plots originating with the Jacobins were the least formidable. They were, generally speaking, conceived by the dregs of the revolutionary party, and could only have met with success through some of the rabid members of the party sacrificing their lives in the execution of a plot. If I am not mistaken, there were two plots of this kind. They rendered the First Consul good service in that they increased his claims to the interest taken in him by all citizens who desired a quiet existence, and who were all the more induced to make his cause their own, when seeing him threatened by men who inspired them with feelings of the greatest terror.

The attempts of the Royalist party exposed him to far more serious dangers. The government had come to terms with the greater number of chiefs in Vendée proper, in Poitou, Maine, and Normandy. Several of them held communications with Fouché, the Minister of Police, and came to Paris pretty frequently. Among those who held aloof there remained only Georges Cadoudal and a few of his more determined officers in the Department of Morbihan. On the other hand, the arrangements entered into with the Holy See, and the negotiations well on the way with the important members of the old clergy, left no room for doubt that by providing for its return the First Consul would soon have at his command the most efficacious means for pacifying the country districts with Royalist leanings, and for again gaining their confidence. Georges decided upon risking everything to get the start of this event, and it was

then that he sent to Paris the determined men who did not hesitate in having recourse to an infernal machine.

When, ten years later, I was Prefect of Police, I discovered, when going through the documents relating to this affair, a paper which revealed to me the energetic character of the man to whom Georges had entrusted the execution of it. His name was Saint-Réjant. At the time when he was arrested in a hiding-place, where he thought himself safe, a letter which he was writing to Georges was found on his person. He complained therein of several untoward circumstances, and especially of certain orders badly carried out, which had caused the attempt to fail. But in spite of the little success of his first undertaking, although badly hurt by the explosion of the machine, and although he could entertain no doubt that after such a demonstration the police would become more vigilant than ever, he nevertheless announced his intention of making another attempt very shortly, and expressed a hope of being successful. At the same time, he complained greatly of a person whom he sufficiently designated, but whom he did not name, and who had apparently refused him assistance.

Several years after the Restoration I chanced to discover who that person was, and I name him because, not without some show of reason, it has been believed that he took an active part in the plot. It was M. Limoëlan, who is to-day a missionary in the wilderness of Canada. He was in Paris at the time of the attempt, and was entrusted with furnishing funds to the conspirators. But the outrage, such as it had been premeditated, had inspired him with horror, and far from contributing to its perpetration, he had tried to dissuade those who were to commit it. From that day, he began to separate himself from the party which he had until then served most faithfully.

Both public and government had not hesitated in charg-

ing the Jacobins with the outrages. They had quite recently engaged in a similar enterprise which had been nipped in the bud. A pretty large number of the most fiery revolutionists were at once arrested. When the truth was known they were nevertheless considered a good prize, and, if I am not mistaken, were transported a short while later.

But the truly important man, whom this mistake placed in the most critical position for a few days, was M. Fouché. His well-known and open connections with the Jacobin party caused him to be suspected in so high a degree, that it has been asserted that M. de Talleyrand, who was at that time his enemy, suggested to the First Consul to have him arrested and shot within twenty-four hours. This did not prevent them, a few days later, from coming together, and even becoming united by the closest bonds.

The real culprits having been discovered, the Royalist party received therefrom the worst blow which could reach it. The outrage estranged from it not only the government and the First Consul, but the mass of the nation likewise. The comprehensiveness of this reprobation was nevertheless most unfair. The affair of the infernal machine was quite at variance with the sentiments of the greater number of the leaders, and even of the Vendean soldiers and chouans. Search was made for all of them, and several were arrested.

Although having personally nothing to do with this deplorable affair, I ran, for a few days, some danger of being compromised through it in the following manner: I had been begged by an intimate friend to give a shelter, for two or three nights, to a leader of chouans, who was all the more suspected, because he had so far refused to make his peace, and had somewhat high-handedly broken off the negotiations which had been begun. It was M. de Brulart, one of the most zealous and most determined men of the

party, whose armed bands he had commanded in Normandy. I was assured under oath that he was a stranger to the infernal machine, and I consented to take him under my roof. He came to my house during the dead of the night. It was the seventh or eighth which he had passed in various hiding-places. He carried about his person an arsenal of pistols and poniards, ever prepared for a desperate hand-to-hand fight.

He not only assured me once more that he had not been concerned in the outrage perpetrated by Saint-Réjant, but, from my house, he wrote a letter to the First Consul, in which he explained matters away in the most express way, and being particular to state, in order to give proof of his truthfulness, that he had entered into another plot, that he intended to attack him bodily, in the midst of his escort, some day when he was on his way to Malmaison, when he was to be killed during the struggle that ensued, if there was otherwise no way of securing his person. This at least was war above board.<sup>1</sup> M. de Brulart left my house after having spent two nights in it. I believe it was about time, as suspicion was getting aroused in the house, which I was not the only person to occupy. He found means to escape from Paris a few days afterwards, and I was not to see him until after the Restoration.

<sup>1</sup> This is probably the plot in which M. Hyde de Neuville, who ever protested against having participated in that of the infernal machine, during the same period, took a part.

## CHAPTER VII

Bonaparte's negotiations with the Holy See—Violent opposition in the Army—Plot to assassinate the First Consul—Proclamation of the Concordat at Notre-Dame—Advantages accruing to France from the Treaty of Amiens in 1802—Reconstruction of the Finances—Legislative work—The life consulate—Rupture between England and France, and plots hatched by the British Cabinet—Pichegru's conspiracy—Louis XVIII.'s rejoinder in this connection—Arrest of Cadoudal, Pichegru, Moreau, and the Polignacs—Pichegru's suicide—Unfounded accusations brought against Bonaparte in this respect—Kidnapping of the Duc d'Enghien at Ettenheim—M. de Caulaincourt's irresponsibility in the affair—The ultimate fate of the Duc d'Enghien discussed—Opinions of Fouché, Talleyrand, Lebrun, and Cambacérès—The First Consul's final determination—Light on the circumstances surrounding the event—Illegality of the sentence passed on the Duc d'Enghien—The part played in this affair by Savary, Talleyrand, Murat, and Réal—Josephine's grief on hearing of the execution—Napoleon, in spite of his remorse, never admits the injustice of the act—M. d'Hauterive apostrophizes M. de Talleyrand, the instigator of the crime—Fouché's famed saying.

THE treaty with the Holy See was almost concluded. It was, no doubt, an important step in the direction of a sincere reconciliation with that part of France to which the Revolution had done the greatest injury. But, at this juncture, Bonaparte was threatened with another danger. He met in the army an opposition which he had cause to fear more than that from any other quarter, for in its midst were found his most devoted partisans.

The signal for the explosion was given by the appearance of a papal envoy, who was received at the Tuileries with the honors due his rank. Such a spectacle could but have the effect of inflaming the fury of the fanatics who, since



1789, had made themselves noticeable by their hatred of the Catholic religion. They argued that this reception was tantamount to a return of clerical domination. Secret meetings were soon held, at which many officers of high rank were present, and among them, a few generals of prominence. Moreau was no stranger to the matter, although he abstained from attending. Things went so far that the assassination of the First Consul was resolved upon. When I was Prefect of Police, I received from the Duc de Rovigo, then Minister of Police, the details which follow.

One Donnadieu, of inferior military rank, declared himself ready to strike the blow, so there was nothing more to do but to find the opportunity. The resolution had been taken, while General Oudinot, a man of honor, was present, and it made him indignant. He considered it his duty to call on General Davout, who commanded the Consul's body-guard, and, at the outset, merely told him to exercise a closer vigilance over the First Consul's safety. On being closely questioned, Oudinot finally named Donnadieu as a proper subject for surveillance. This intimation sufficed for Davout, who at once arrested Donnadieu, who, upon being taken to the Temple and placed in solitary confinement, volunteered to reveal the plot, and named all those who had been present at the meetings he had attended.

Steps were at once taken to disperse the conspirators, who were sent away to a greater or lesser distance. Some of them were placed under arrest, while others were sent into exile. Among the latter was General Monnier, of the Army of Italy, who up to that time had been entirely loyal to Bonaparte. He commanded a brigade in Desaix's division, and had powerfully contributed to the victory at Marengo. Yet he was one of the most ardent promoters of the plot. He did not again hold any command until the

time of the Restoration, and then, as a matter of course, he became as zealous a Royalist, as in 1800 he had been a rabid revolutionist. During the Hundred Days, he attached himself to the Duc d'Angoulême, and was created a peer at the second Restoration. I had known him in 1792. A member of my family had obtained for him from M. Narbonne, then Minister of War, a company in some regiment or other. He did not prove ungrateful. When I met him in 1814, he did not seek to hide from me what had caused his disgrace in 1800.

General Lecourbe likewise belonged to the Donnadiou conspiracy. He left the Temple shortly afterwards, and being somewhat fearful that his comrades might scent that he had helped to betray them, he begged for an excuse and means by which he might absent himself for a time. Davout supplied him with funds, and helped him to cross over to England, instructing him to pass himself off as an escaped prisoner from the Temple, to pose as a malcontent, and to find out what was going on in the party which was still in England's pay.

He followed these instructions, spent several months in England, and returned by way of Holland. On landing in that country, he placed in the hands of the officer commanding the gendarmerie, a communication which was at once forwarded to Paris to the Inspector-General of that military body. This document was the first clue to the great conspiracy, once more being woven by Georges, wherein Moreau was implicated, and from which resulted the fatal termination of the Duc d'Enghien's life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I feel that I must say once more that all these particulars were furnished me by the Duc de Rovigo, at a time when he had no interest in distorting the truth, and when such an intention could not be laid to him. He went so far as to show me documents in support of the truth of his narrative. A somewhat amusing anecdote in connection with this affair, deserves, methinks, to find a place here. If I tell it, it is because main

I was present at the ceremony of the proclamation of the Concordat at Notre-Dame. Never did Bonaparte appear greater than on that day.<sup>1</sup> It was the most signal triumph that could be won over the revolutionary idea, and all triumphs which came after it were merely — I make no exception — its natural consequences.

The joy of the overwhelming majority of France silenced even the boldest malcontents. A number of people, who, previous to this triumph, had not ventured to express their feelings in the matter openly, no longer dissembled them; and it became patent that Bonaparte had, better than those who surrounded him, seen into the depths of the nation's heart.

He could have obtained from the Pope, so I was told in the most positive fashion, far greater concessions than those granted.<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Consalvi had in this connection more

facts are never better confirmed than by an acquaintance with their particulars. While Donnadieu was in the Temple, it was rumored that he had died there, and, as a matter of course, a violent death. On hearing of this, General Oudinot hastened to call upon General Davout, with the object of reproaching him bitterly for permitting such a crime to be committed on the person of a man whose intentions had only been made known through the warning which Oudinot had seen fit to give. He found Donnadieu engaged in a most confidential talk with Davout, who laughed at his discomfiture.

<sup>1</sup> It was noticed, at the time of this great triumph, that he saw fit to gratify his self-love with a ceremony which could but appear futile to those who did not see in it a shadow of his coming plans. As the Second and Third Consuls were to accompany him during the ceremony, the clergy had asked him whether the censor was to be waved in their case as well as in his own. He answered, "No." This honor was therefore rendered to him alone. It was known, moreover, in his intimate circle, that besides saying no, he added the following derisive words: "The smoke of incense is yet too strong for them."

<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is but fair to state that M. de Talleyrand, in all the negotiations in which he was engaged, having for their object the bringing about of a complete reconciliation with the Holy See, showed himself animated by a sole desire of insuring their success. Was he, unknown to himself, moved by the recollection of some of his former bonds to the Church? Was he merely yielding to a conviction of the extreme importance of a religious peace, which alone could make secure the power to

extended powers than merely those of which he availed himself, especially in connection with the marriage and divorce of priests.

The First Consul was so informed; but he replied to those who told him of it, and who urged him to take advantage of it: "Do you wish me to have manufactured a religion of caprice for my special use, a religion that would be nobody's? I do not so understand matters. What I want is the old Catholic religion, the only one which is imbedded in every heart, and from which it has never been torn. This religion alone can conciliate hearts in my favor; it alone can smooth away all obstacles." It will be seen further on how far he was right when he thus spoke, and his mistakes become all the more striking as he strays from the path which this language should have made him follow to the end.

I left Paris after the conclusion of the Treaty of Lunéville with Austria, and the Concordat with the Holy See.

Negotiations had been entered upon with England, and soon resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Amiens, on March 25th, 1802. Spain and the Batavian Republic joined in signing this treaty which brought complete peace to Europe, and put an end to the war which the French Revolution engendered, and which had lasted since 1792.<sup>1</sup>

France emerged from it with happy results, surpassing everything that the highest flights of fancy could ever have

which he had given himself up? Did he, at that early date, see the advantage he could derive therefrom for himself, and the kind of freedom it would give back to him, a freedom the use of which some notice will have to be taken hereafter? . . . History does not supply the means for sounding the mysteries of the human heart.

<sup>1</sup> If M. de Talleyrand is to be believed, this treaty of peace served the First Consul beyond his desires, for on receiving news of it, he is credited with having said to his Minister: "Well, well! What a beautiful fix we are in now. Peace has been declared." The anecdote is a piquant one, but all that I can guarantee is that it was told by M. de Talleyrand.

conceived. She retained possession of the Austrian Netherlands and of Dutch Flanders. She controlled the navigation of the Scheldt and received a part of Dutch Brabant, the whole of that part of Germany situated on the left bank of the Rhine, the bishopric of Bâle almost in its entirety, Savoy, together with Geneva and Nice, Avignon, and with it the Comtat.

She kept, over and above the territory recognized as her own, the State of Parma, and all the continental possessions of the king of Sardinia. She erected the Grand Duchy of Tuscany into the Kingdom of Etruria, and made a gift of it to the Duke of Parma. She administered the affairs of the Italian Republic, and exercised a domination over the Helvetic and Ligurian Republic, composed of the territories of which Geneva was formerly the capital. Lastly, she was mistress of Holland. The colonies, of which she had been despoiled by England, were restored to her. She added to the possession of the French portion of San Domingo, the Spanish portion, previously ceded to her by Spain.

This peace was indeed purchased at Holland's expense, the islands of Ceylon and of Trinidad remaining in England's possession.

What was not the power of this chief, whose title was yet so modest, and who, without France making the smallest sacrifice, could obtain such valuable concessions from his allies?

On leaving the capital, I returned to the Department of the Sarthe, whence I had been driven, two years previous, by the law relating to hostages. The situation had indeed altered, and I was to enjoy the blessings of a life as calm and happy as the one I had led there in years gone by had been agitated and hard to bear.

After the Treaty of Amiens, France enjoyed at last the



rest of which she stood in such need. During the too short duration of these happy days, the attention of the government was directed principally towards interior organization and administration. This was the period when the work of material restoration which the country so needed was given an impetus which has not ceased at the present time.

It is impossible to conceive, if one had not been a witness of it before and after the 18th Brumaire, of the widespread ruin wrought by the Revolution. To the state of dilapidation deliberately brought about, was to be added that resulting from mere enforced neglect during a period of ten years. As an instance, there were hardly two or three main roads in a fit condition for traffic. Not a single one was there, perhaps, wherein was not found some obstacle that could not be surmounted without peril. With regard to the ways of internal communication, they had been indefinitely suspended. The navigation of rivers and canals was no longer feasible.

In all directions, public buildings, and those monuments which represent the splendor of a state, were falling into decay. It must fain be admitted that if the work of destruction had been prodigious, that of restoration was no less so. Everything was taken hold of at one and the same time, and everything progressed with a like rapidity. Not only was it resolved to restore all that required restoring in various parts of the country, in all parts of the public service, but new, grand, beautiful, and useful works were decided upon, and many were brought to a happy termination. This certainly constitutes one of the most brilliant sides of the consular and imperial régime.

It was necessary to put the financial system in order, and to create a revenue proportionate with the expenditure. A few upright and industrious men, among whom the Minister of Finance, M. Gaudin, later Duke of Gaeta,

had already rendered immense services to the state and to the chief of the government. M. Gaudin published, in 1818 or 1819, a work wherein he sets forth with scrupulous exactness the state in which he found the Treasury, and the footing on which he succeeded in placing it. It would be hard to conceive a more interesting and a more instructive tableau. And yet, they did not succeed in getting rid of arrears, the liquidation of which extended over the first ten years of the century. The result was an ill-concealed state of bankruptcy, until the day when it became an accomplished fact by means of a decree of forfeiture to which it was not dared to give an official publication.

Unstinted praise must be awarded to the legislative work done by the Council of State at the very outset of its organization. It was accomplished under the direction of three men of the highest merit, Messieurs Tronchet, Portalis, and Cambacérès. They presided over the drawing up of the civil code, several volumes of which made their appearance annually, and the ensemble of which, in spite of a few weak spots, still remains a monument of civil legislation, the most perfect and comprehensive of modern times.

The First Consul was in the habit of taking an active part in the discussions, and it is generally admitted that his natural lights shone therein to quite a remarkable degree. He sought to introduce into the institutions and customs of the country a spirit less removed from monarchical forms and ideas. But much remained for him to do in order to carry out this intention. One of his happiest conceptions in this vein was the creation of the Legion of Honor. He gave offence to many republicans accustomed to look upon as an infringement on equality all outward mark of distinction, when not coupled with some official position. The great results accomplished by the institu-

tion of this decoration are a sufficient refutation of all adverse criticisms.

The First Consul took advantage of the state of peace to change his temporary consulship into a life one. This change gave rise to an opposition somewhat loudly expressed on the part of those who adhered more closely to the principles of the Revolution. Carnot was among those who opposed it, and the opposition found the greater number of its mouthpieces in the *Tribunat*.

A falling out with England took place in May, 1803. Bitterness of speech and violence in deed soon rose to the highest pitch between the two countries. England, according to her invariable custom, seized everything she could on the high seas, — ships, merchandise, and individuals, — and this before the breaking off of negotiations was complete, even before it had fully taken place.

By way of reprisal, the First Consul caused all Englishmen travelling in France to be arrested. This way of acting was after all no more iniquitous than England's, except that the latter's methods were consecrated by custom. But a custom, however long it has been in vogue, does not constitute a right. The most that could be said against the mode of reprisal conceived by Bonaparte, was that it was insignificant, and affected an interest too slight in England's eyes, to induce the government of that country to return to the paths of justice. It was consequently useless.

No means existed of striking a blow at Great Britain on the seas, where her forces were too considerable to allow of a protracted struggle being maintained, so it became necessary to threaten her in another direction. This compelled taking up once more the idea of landing an army on her shores, an idea which had already been broached during the months preceding the expedition to Egypt, and which the First Consul had made pretence of recurring to during

the interval which elapsed between the Treaty of Lunéville and that of Amiens; but this time it was taken up with far greater ardor. The whole of France's resources were set in motion. England, on her side, made such serious preparations for defence that it may be concluded that she did not consider the danger which threatened her as an imaginary one.

The chances operating against the success of the expedition were doubtless in a majority, but a few favorable ones existed. The hazards of the sea are so great! In order that the French flotilla should be able to cross without hindrance, it was sufficient that the English Channel should be kept clear for five or six days. Now this might occur either through a violent storm, which would compel the British fleet to seek port, or by an engagement resulting favorably, and the French navy was still in a position to bring about such a consummation.

It then becomes possible to take into consideration the landing of forty thousand French soldiers, at a point fifty-six leagues distant from London, and to ponder over the results, at a time when England was still without an army hardened to war, while the prestige attached to the French armies was yet so dazzling.

Yet another road to success presented itself; but its value was not recognized, and it was disdainfully cast aside. Fulton, an American, the inventor of steamboats, came over and did the honors of his invention to the First Consul, who peremptorily declined to have anything to do with it. Never was he more badly served by his instinct.

What might he not have been able to accomplish, had he been the first to avail himself of this new means of reaching his most mortal enemy? But was the invention in so advanced a state as to allow of its being put to such an extended use as would have been necessary to secure the

transportation of an army to England's shores? This may be doubted. Moreover, almost insurmountable difficulties stood in the way of the immense amount of manufacture necessary to this end, the elements of which were lacking in those days. But later, and during the prolonged struggle which ended only with Napoleon's reign, how many opportunities were there not for putting to use this wonderful invention? Surprise will doubtless be felt that a genius, such as that of the First Consul's, should not have at once grasped the range of the offer made him by Fulton.

The perspective of so great a danger was doubtless cause that the British Cabinet resolved upon giving all possible encouragement to the attacks directed against the person of its most formidable enemy. England thought it allowable to act towards Bonaparte, as she would have blushed to do with respect to the sovereign of Prussia or of Austria. In a measure, she put him beyond the pale of the law of nations. It was a perilous example to set to a man possessed of so great a power, who was certainly not over scrupulous, and who might, moreover, be inclined to believe that the legitimate right of self-protection placed him above all laws.

Assuredly, the undertaking which had brought Pichegru, Messieurs de Polignac and de Rivière to Paris, and to which Moreau was no stranger, was not to be put to execution with the aid of infernal machines. Georges was still one of the principal agents in this undertaking. He had directed the plot of the 3d Nivôse, and the First Consul, on discovering him in the midst of the new conspirators, was certainly justified in believing what was in store for him, from that which had already been attempted.

The undertaking, the principal agents of which I have just named, was conceived and pursued with the consent of the Comte d'Artois alone, for that of the king was never



obtained, at least in any specific fashion. He was merely content to give his reply in the following quotation:—

“ . . . Et, pour être approuvés,  
De semblables projets veulent être achevés.”

This way of answering will be readily believed by all who were privileged to come in contact with Louis XVIII., and who were acquainted with his habits. It came to me through M. Royer-Collard, who had received it from the Abbé André, at that time the king's private secretary.<sup>1</sup>

I was in Paris when the conspiracy was unearthed. All I knew about it in those days was that which was known to everybody; but, when I was Prefect of Police, in 1810, I had at my disposal all the documents relating to it. They were still in the files of the préfecture, and I went through them carefully. Besides, the Duc de Rovigo did not hide from me many particulars personal to him, and I obtained from M. Réal, on several points, explanations which always confirmed my other discoveries.

What I have previously said regarding the information supplied by Donnadieu, as to an important plot which was being hatched in London, had doubtless not been forgotten. It would seem that the clue thus given did not lead to any great discoveries. Later on, the spies scattered through Germany called attention to certain goings on between the *émigrés* and England's agents, indicative of new and secret

<sup>1</sup> This abbé, if he is to be believed, was the actual framer of Louis XVIII.'s dignified answer to Bonaparte, when the latter transmitted him the offer of an establishment on a grand scale, of whatever nature he might desire, if he but consented to abdicate his rights to the crown of France. What is certain, however, is that the abbé preserved a rough draft written in the king's hand, wherein the answer was altogether different, and which contained the ridiculous proposition of a duel. At the death of the Abbé André, the government made a careful search of his papers, among which it hoped to find this document as well as several other most important ones, but he had apparently taken his precautions, for not a scrap was found.

projects. But little importance was attached to this note of warning.

In those days, the Ministry of Police was combined with that of justice, the portfolio of which was held by M. Rénier, a good lawyer, but hardly capable of fulfilling the new duties thrust upon him, for he lacked both activity and perspicacity. But the heads of departments, who had served in the police under M. Fouché, and who were all accustomed to follow up the slightest indications, finally succeeded in inspiring him with the liveliest fears. A more frequent intercourse had been noticed between the shores of England and Brittany. Several individuals had been arrested on landing, but nothing had been learned from them. They claimed that they were former chouans, who, tired of living in a foreign land, were returning to their native country.

M. Réal, Councillor of State, and more especially in charge of the political police in the northern departments and in those of Brittany, was struck by the frequency of these new arrivals, and, with his customary warmth, made a private report of the fact to the First Consul. Several of the men arrested were imprisoned in the Temple; but in vain were they questioned, they would say nothing.

It then occurred to Bonaparte to select one of them at haphazard, and to bring him before a military commission. It was thought that the fear of death would make him speak. This idea perhaps saved Bonaparte's life. Fate willed it that the man chosen should be one Quérelle, a surgeon, an adherent of the chouan party, but possessing less nerve than the others. Taken before a military commission, sentenced to death, and led to the place of execution, he begged for his life at the very last moment, and purchased it at the cost of most valuable revelations. He made known that Georges was in Paris, together with several of his trusted fellow-conspirators, and left no doubt

as to the existence of a formidable plot. Aided by his information, the police at once began hunting down the conspirators, but Qu  relle knew only those who belonged to the *chouannerie*. He merely knew that a landing was to be made in Normandy, under the cliffs of Biville, and he seemed convinced that a French prince was to form part of the enterprise.

General Savary, later on Duc de Rovigo, commanding the picked corps of the gendarmerie, was immediately sent to the coast to keep an eye on the landing. In order to better fulfil his mission, he went there in disguise, taking with him as guide an old *chouan*, who had been completely won over by the police.

Everybody knows how Georges and his principal accomplices were arrested in Paris. The unfortunate Pichegru was delivered up through an infamous act of treachery. As the result of confessions extorted from several of those arrested with him, it was learnt that he had seen Moreau several times, and that he had come into contact with Georges on at least one occasion. Something had therefore to be done with regard to Moreau. It might be that he had seen Pichegru, his former comrade in arms, for some very innocent purpose. He owed him the rise of his fortunes, and had done him several wrongs, for which he might wish to make reparation, or, at the very least, to explain away. But with regard to the meetings with Georges, how could they be otherwise accounted for except by motives an explanation of which the government was justified in demanding? Consequently Moreau was arrested, and to M. Regnier was entrusted the task of questioning him.

It would appear (I have every reason to believe) that the First Consul reckoned on the weakness of his character, and that he intended granting him a pardon if he but

obtained from him half a confession. When once implicated in so serious a fashion, he was no longer to be feared, whereas the trial of a man of such importance is always a troublesome and embarrassing affair. M. Regnier's bad management was the cause of the failure of this plan. He gave the interrogatory a turn which compelled Moreau to assume an attitude of firmness little in accord with his habitual temperament. Nothing was therefore left but to include him among those who were tried by the criminal tribunal of the Seine sitting without a jury. A decree of the Senate had just suspended for two years, but plainly in view of the present occasion, the participation of juries in trials relating to attempts made against the life of the First Consul.

This measure was in itself of an odious character, and it became all the more detestable when applied to so important a personality as Moreau. At all events, the resolution come to in his case had unfortunate results for Bonaparte. A considerable portion of the army and all or almost all the Bretons, hot-headed men, and accustomed to look upon Moreau as an honor to the province, were led to take an interest in the conspiracy, through the necessity of coming to his defence. Moreover, the emotion of the Royalist party could not help being great, when so many men of note belonging to its ranks were implicated in the plot.

Just as the case was coming to trial, Pichegru was found strangled to death in his cell at the Temple. As a matter of course, his death was attributed to an assassination ordered by Bonaparte, with the object of ridding himself of a foe of firm and vigorous character, and who in defending himself might cause trouble. Such an idea was no sooner conceived than the masses were ready to take it up with eagerness. I have read with the greatest care all the official reports connected with the case. I have spoken to

the principal police officials of that time, and all the information which I have thus carefully gleaned agrees with that obtained by me regarding this point from the Duc de Rovigo. I have, I believe, good grounds for declaring that Pichegru committed suicide. He felt completely crushed under the weight of the misfortunes which had pursued him since the 18th Fructidor. His courage had deserted him. The latest act of treachery, that of the man who had delivered him up, had deprived him of all nerve. He thought the anxieties of a trial too great for him to endure. He could but anticipate being found guilty, and of owing his life to his greatest enemy, so he preferred death.

It has been argued that it was not possible for him to strangle himself as he did. I have had proof to the contrary, for one Levillant took his life in the same fashion in the prison attached to the prefecture of police, when I dwelt there. Again, if one looks at the matter dispassionately, what interest had Bonaparte to commit such a crime? Pichegru had not any serious defence to present to the tribunal. He had been arrested in flagrant conspiracy, with, so to speak, the arms of a conspirator in hand. During the course of the trial, the prosecution could recall the act of treachery of which he had been suspected when last he commanded an army, and which had led him to willingly allow himself to be beaten, and to sacrifice the troops under his orders.

If the fact was not sufficiently proven to call forth a judicial investigation, it was at least easy to establish sufficient presumptions for depriving the general of the Republic of the credit he might still enjoy with his former comrades in arms, and to make him lose all claims to respect. He was certain to be condemned to death, and this placed him at the mercy of the First Consul, who had everything to gain by waiting for so favorable an issue.



Assuredly, as between Pichegru and Moreau, it was Moreau whom it would have been advantageous to assassinate. He had quite more powerful means of defence, and much more influential partisans than Pichegru. It cannot be denied that there were strong inferences to be deduced from his conduct, but the trial proved that there were not sufficient proofs against him to call for a sentence of death.

And yet, Moreau was not assassinated in his cell, although it would not have been any more difficult to get rid of him thus than of Pichegru. The naked truth is already sad enough without making the picture any darker. It must not be believed that I pretend to say that the First Consul did not commit as grave a blunder in the case of Pichegru as of Moreau. He could have caused the greatest honor to reflect upon himself had he acted rightly in their case. But, if he was possessed of a mind capable of grasping everything, his heart was bare of that which could enlighten it as to the advantage to be derived from generous impulses. If, on the arrest of Pichegru, Bonaparte had remembered only the conqueror of Holland, and had rescued him from despair by showing some consideration for his misfortune; if, instead of handing over Moreau to the rigors of a criminal prosecution, he had, in consideration of the many services he had rendered, shown a noble forgetfulness, and held out to him a friendly hand, such conduct would have won all hearts.

This brings us to the most odious phase of this affair. As will often happen, fatality may have begun the work which political perversity carried to completion. This becomes a certainty, if one gives unreserved credence to what M. Réal and the Duc de Rovigo told me about the case in 1811.

Their story is as follows: The servant of Georges, from whom, as I have already stated, much information had been

obtained, had pointed out the place where the principal leaders of the conspiracy were wont to assemble. It was in a *cul-de-sac* near Saint-Roch. He had given the names of all those who were present, with the exception of that of one man who was unknown to him, whose name had never been pronounced in his presence, but whose presence created the greatest stir. He was in the habit of going in quest of him, and bringing him to the place of meeting with the greatest precautions. He furnished a description of him which did not indicate in a positive fashion who he really was. Nevertheless, after many useless conjectures as to the identity of this important personage, the possibility of his being one of the princes of the House of Bourbon was entertained, and Bonaparte but too readily sprang at the idea.

All police action in the matter was concentrated in the hands of M. Regnier. He prepared and did everything, and he doubtless contributed, in no small measure, towards aggravating the circumstances of this deplorable affair. I have it from M. de Cambacérès that at one time he succeeded in thoroughly alarming the First Consul; in this, he was admirably seconded by the secret communications of M. Fouché, who was thus preparing his own elevation to the Ministry of Police.

The supposition once entertained that the individual could be no other than one of the princes of the House of Bourbon, it remained to find out which one it could be. The dwelling-place of the Duc d'Angoulême was known beyond doubt; the Duc de Berry was awaited on the coast of Brittany. Thus, suspicion could not rest on either of them. The conclusion naturally reached was that it must be the Duc d'Enghien. He generally dwelt at Ettenheim, in Baden, at a very short distance from the French frontier.

For some time past it had been reported that the assem-

blage of *émigrés* in the environs of his residence was larger than usual, and a fatal mistake in a name had caused the belief that Dumouriez, whose enterprising character was so well established, formed part of the assemblage. Information had been received from London that he was about to leave that city to go to Berlin. It so happened that at the time it was presumed he had reached his destination, one Desmoutier, an *émigré* well known as a devoted adherent of the House of Bourbon, and employed by it in many negotiations, left Berlin for a town in the neighborhood of Ettenheim. The spies of the French police had confounded his name with that of Dumouriez, and so they reported that he had arrived, or was about to arrive, on the banks of the Rhine.

Under such serious circumstances, it was natural enough to believe that a gathering thus constituted, and having at its head, by the side of the prince, a man like Dumouriez, did not exist without possessing some information as to what was being concocted in Paris, and without preparations being made to take advantage of events.

Was there any cause for coupling with such a probability the circumstance, hard to credit, but not altogether out of consideration, of a mysterious trip undertaken to Paris by the prince, with a view of coming to an understanding with the conspirators, and giving them his countenance and support? This was a matter which had to be verified. It was sought to do so, but this was not an easy task.

General Moncey, later a Marshal of France, at that time in chief command of the gendarmerie, and in this capacity greatly in requisition in the case of inquiries, thought himself competent to solve this difficulty. There was in the gendarmerie a non-commissioned officer, formerly employed in the Condé family, and therefore acquainted with all its

servants. He claimed to be able to find out if the Duc d'Enghien had made any secret journey at the time indicated.

The proposition was accepted, the officer went on his mission, and returned with the information that the Duc d'Enghien had certainly made a very mysterious journey, precisely during the days when the secret councils of the conspirators were being held in Paris. The fact was true; but the motive of the prince's trip had been to call on Mlle. de Rohan, to whom he was believed to be secretly married.

Upon obtaining this clue, Bonaparte at once took the necessary steps to secure the person of the Duc d'Enghien and that of the alleged Dumouriez, who was no other than M. Desmoutier, also the other persons who were supposed to be gathered at Ettenheim or in the neighborhood. It is more than probable that he only set real importance on getting the duke, and that he merely gave the order for the other arrests as a pretext for that particular one, and to justify it by the importance it seemed to give the whole affair.

In order to carry out this act of kidnapping, it was necessary to violate foreign territory; but this obstacle was not allowed to stand in the way. If the Duc de Rovigo is to be believed, the accommodating spirit shown on this occasion by the Duke of Dalberg, at that time minister plenipotentiary from the Grand Duke of Baden, was the source of the favor he enjoyed with Bonaparte, and procured for him the estates he was afterwards given in Germany, in compensation for those which his family had lost. But why should not these estates have been granted to him, in the ordinary course, at the request of his uncle, the Prince Primate, of whom Bonaparte was very fond, who was one of his most faithful partisans in Germany, who had entered into all his views, and who had countenanced all his wishes?

The assertions of the Duc de Rovigo in this connection have always seemed to me to be lacking proof and verisimilitude. The Duke of Dalberg published in 1824 three documents from his correspondence with the Court of Baden in those days, and they prove that he did not urge upon that Court the granting of any concession. They reveal some tardiness in keeping it informed of the march of events, and the Duc de Rovigo has maintained that such tardiness was concerted with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs; but it may also be attributed to the fact that the Duke of Dalberg was himself but poorly informed. There is nothing extraordinary in this, owing to the unimportance of his position in Paris.

The particulars of the expedition to Ettenheim are too well known to be here repeated. It was successful in so far as the carrying off of the Duc d'Enghien and the members of his suite by General Ordener was concerned. It was fruitless with regard to the persons whom General de Caulaincourt was to arrest at Offenbourg. These two generals had been sent from Paris, bearing special orders from the Minister of War. It was generally believed at the time that M. de Caulaincourt, who enjoyed the special confidence of the First Consul, had been deputed to preside over the whole expedition, and that he was in a certain way its chief. Everybody knows how, in 1814, he labored to destroy this opinion.

It is impossible not to be convinced that M. de Caulaincourt had not the slightest conception of the terrible issue of the kidnapping in which his mission gave him an appearance of co-operating. I am firmly convinced that if he had but foreseen it, he would never have consented even to this apparent connection with it. When on arriving from Strasburg he learnt, on stopping at Malmaison, what had taken place at Vincennes, great was his despair. I heard



this at the time from people who witnessed it. He expressed his indignation so forcibly that those present hardly knew what countenance to assume. Unfortunately, he soon after committed the mistake of accepting a high position at Court near the man who had just compromised him, and this weak subservience did him much harm, for it gave him an appearance of complicity.

Such was the sentiment I heard expressed a few years later by a man of honor truly devoted to Bonaparte, whose creature he was, but who had none the less preserved a most noble independence of spirit and character. It was M. de La Valette, Postmaster-General, and as such better informed than any one else with regard to the most secret matters. "After so unfortunate an occurrence," he said to me one day, towards the close of a conversation which was all in defence of M. de Caulaincourt, "there remained but one thing for him to do. He should have left at once and gone back to the army, never again to leave it."

One cannot help regretting that such a stigma became attached to the life of a man, who, during the rest of his political career won so many claims to public esteem and even gratitude.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since I have written these pages, M. de Caulaincourt has published, under the head of *Examens des calomnies répandues sur M. de Caulaincourt, duc de Vicence*, a more conclusive justification of his conduct than any hitherto known. As the result of setting side by side all the documents and the orders given, it appears that no direct and personal commission was given him with regard to the Duc d'Enghien, and that one may go so far as to say that he was ignorant of what was about to take place. His personal conduct, in the undertaking which he directed, was stamped with a marked generosity towards the *émigrés* who were surrounded by the troops under his command, and who, almost to a man, owed him their liberty. This conduct, so much in conformity with the sense of honor he showed on so many other occasions, proves in a most conclusive fashion that he cannot have knowingly lent his assistance to the outrage committed on the person of the Duc d'Enghien. He is, therefore, greatly to be pitied, for how can one prevent his name, after it has been coupled with that catastrophe, and has remained bound up with it for such a length of time, being separated from it to the extent required by justice? (Note written in 1824.)

The Duc d'Enghien was carried off and brought to Paris. The news of the success of the expedition was quickly transmitted by the telegraph; but, to the honor of the French character it must be stated, that if it caused general anxiety, this anxiety did not go so far as to dwell on the terrible catastrophe which was to follow.

I had personally received a warning which should have prepared me for it. The very day on which the news of his carrying off was received, a ball was given at the Hôtel de Luynes. M. de Talleyrand was present. Some one asked him in a whisper: "But what are you going to do with the Duc d'Enghien?" He answered: "He is to be shot." A lady who stood by heard both question and answer, and reported them to me next morning. I thought her hearing had deceived her, or that it was merely a mocking answer given by M. de Talleyrand to an indiscreet question. It was, in any case, said in consequence of a determination already taken, and of which the world was ignorant.

The First Consul had discussed with his most intimate councillors the question of what was to be done. This is what really occurred, according to what I have been told by those better situated to know. A council was held on the 9th of March. It is almost certain that previous to this council, which was a kind of official affair, a more secret one had been held at the house of Joseph Bonaparte.

At the first council, to which were convened only a few persons, all on a footing of family intimacy, it was discussed by order of the First Consul, what would be proper to do with a prince of the House of Bourbon, in case one should have him in one's power, and the decision reached was that if he was captured on French territory, one had the right to take his life, but not otherwise.

At the council held on the 9th, and which was composed of the three Consuls, the Chief Justice, the Minister of

Foreign Affairs, and M. Fouché, although the latter had not then resumed the post of Minister of Police, the two men who expressed contrary opinions were M. de Talleyrand and M. de Cambacérès.

M. de Talleyrand declared that the prince should be sent to his death. M. Lebrun, the Third Consul, contented himself with saying that such an event would have a terrible echo throughout the world. M. de Cambacérès contended earnestly that it would be sufficient to hold the prince as hostage for the safety of the First Consul. The latter sided with M. de Talleyrand, whose counsels then prevailed.

The discussion was a heated one, and when the meeting of the council was over, M. de Cambacérès thought it his duty to make a last attempt, so he followed Bonaparte into his study, and laid before him with perhaps more strength than might be expected from his character, the consequences of the deed he was about to perpetrate, and the universal horror it would excite. He told him that all Europe might rise in arms against France, in the face of this violation of the law of nations, of this shedding the blood of kings, and that the First Consul, until then foreign to the crimes of the Revolution, would be imitating them.

He spoke in vain. In the privacy of his study, Bonaparte expressed himself even with greater violence than he had done at the council. He answered that the death of the duke would seem to the world but a just reprisal for what was being attempted against him personally; that it was necessary to teach the House of Bourbon that the blows struck with its sanction were liable to recoil on its own head; that this was the only way of compelling it to abstain from its dastardly schemes, and lastly, that matters had gone too far to retrace one's steps. M. de Talleyrand supplied this last argument.

During this private talk, Bonaparte took care to let M.

de Cambacérès see that he was desirous of making those who attached themselves to his fortunes understand that all *rapprochement* between himself and the House of Bourbon was henceforth impossible. Nothing could have had greater weight with the principal partisans of the Revolution than this assurance, and it is well known that Bonaparte still thought it best to consult the feelings of some of them.

It has been said that in the fit of anger brought on by the opposition of the Second Consul, Bonaparte so far forgot himself as to say to him: "It ill becomes you to show yourself so sparing of the blood of your kings, you who cast a vote for the death of Louis XVI.!" "Such is not the case," is said to have been the Second Consul's rejoinder.

M. de Cambacérès, when relating with much detail this terrible scene, would never admit the truth of this final incident. Nevertheless, there are good grounds for believing that it was in connection with it that he drew up a memorandum explaining his vote during the trial of the king, which memorandum he handed to the First Consul, and which he subsequently showed to those whose respect he thought it worth while to preserve. I was one of those he thus honored with his confidence. The memorandum left the impression on my mind that M. de Cambacérès had really intended to save the king, and that his contradictory vote had been so contrived as to rally the timid men from whom an open resistance could not be hoped for. At the time of the Restoration, this memorandum was brought to the king's notice, and later on, its author had to thank the explanations it contained for being exempted from the measures enforced against the regicides.

Meanwhile, the Duc d'Enghien was nearing Paris, on his way to Vincennes.

That which here follows is, in the first place, derived

literally from the narrative of the Duc de Rovigo, two years before the Restoration.

It will be recalled that General Savary had been sent to the Normandy coast to watch the landing which had been announced as about to take place. It did not occur. A timely warning had been received at the seashore of what had happened in Paris, and the ship, bearing several persons, among others, it was supposed, the Duc de Berry, sailed away.

And yet the general had manœuvred so as not only to arrest the prince, should he land, but even to induce him to do so. He had personally gone to the cliff at Biville, made all the preconcerted signals, which were known to him. The signals were seen and answered; but, fortunately for the expedition, the wind was violent, and in the wrong quarter for a couple of days, so that the landing became an impossibility, and this delay was sufficient to send to the captain of the brig a warning, which made him go out to sea again.

The mission of General Savary (such was at that time the name of the Duc de Rovigo) had no longer any object. He had been back in Paris for twenty-four hours, and had gone to Malmaison, either to report on this mission, or to resume his duties as *aide-de-camp*, on the morn before the night when sentence was pronounced and carried into execution.

The First Consul was closeted with M. de Talleyrand, and Savary had to wait for the end of their conference ere he could speak with him. On being admitted into Bonaparte's presence, as soon as he was at leisure, he was ordered to go and take command of a detachment of the *gendarmerie d'élite*, which had already gone to Vincennes, and of the entire garrison of the château. He was also entrusted with a letter which he was to deliver to General



Murat on his way thither, which letter contained more explicit instructions as to what he was to do at Vincennes. Thus, if the Duc de Rovigo is to be believed, he did not receive from the First Consul any direct order with regard to the sentence or the execution of the Duc d'Enghien.

On seeing General Murat, whom M. de Talleyrand was leaving just as he arrived, he was informed by that general that a military commission had been called together to try, that very night, at Vincennes, the Duc d'Enghien, and to him, Savary, was entrusted the keeping guard over the prisoner, and to carry into execution, without the slightest delay, the sentence of the commission, whatever it might be.

Savary went to Vincennes, after these orders had been several times repeated to him. The commission met immediately afterwards. It was composed of a number of unfortunate officers, who, with the exception of the president and the judge-advocate, were only informed of what was expected of them on entering the château. The president himself has always asserted, but the fact is hard to believe, that he was even ignorant of the name of the prisoner whom he was to try. One thing is certain, and that is, that great care had been exercised in order that the officers selected should receive their orders too late for them to take any concerted action, or to seek and obtain advice. They all held the rank of colonel. It will be seen later how they acted in connection with their finding.

The sentence, which was one of death, was immediately carried out. Everything was over before seven o'clock in the morning. Savary's duties, as commander of the gendarmerie at Vincennes, having apparently ended with this execution, he at once left for Paris. This is the place to record a fact, which, if true, has a rather important bearing on the case.

Savary related it to me several times, in 1812, always in

the same words, and his narrative was, moreover, confirmed to me in all its particulars, by M. Réal. As already stated, he was on his way to Paris to render an account of his mission, when he met, at the gates of the capital, M. Réal, dressed as a Councillor of State, *with white stockings, and buckles to his shoes*; such are the very words of the Duc de Rovigo. He was journeying towards Vincennes, and seemed to be in a great hurry. "Well, and where are you going?" called Savary to him, stopping his own carriage. "I am going to Vincennes," said M. Réal, bringing his own alongside that of Savary, "and am going there by order of the First Consul to question the Duc d'Enghien." — "What are you talking about? Is the First Consul not aware that the Duc d'Enghien's trial took place, as ordered, last night; that he was sentenced to death, and that the sentence has been carried into execution?" — "How can such a thing have happened?" exclaimed M. Réal. "I had so many questions to ask the prince. So many things might have been discovered by examining him! One more opportunity let slip. Now, nothing will be known. The First Consul will be furious!"

There was nothing left for M. Réal to do after this meeting but to return home, while Savary proceeded on his journey, to report to Murat that he had faithfully executed his orders. Then he went to Malmaison, to carry the same news. Such is his narrative as repeated to me several times in 1811, 1812, and 1813, faithfully reported.

I have now to recur to the more particular circumstances of the sentence and of the execution. Concerning this portion of my story, I have nothing to guide me but the accounts given, in secret confidence, by the members of the commission, by residents in the château of Vincennes, and by soldiers forming part of the garrison. Generally speaking, these accounts have been confirmed, since the Resto-

ration, by discoveries then made. Hence I believe that credence can be attached to them.

As soon as the commission assembled, it was made acquainted with the documents which supplied the grounds of the accusation. They comprised several reports from M. Réal, a letter from the prefect of Strasburg, a report from the officer of gendarmerie already mentioned as having been sent to Ettenheim; a bundle of letters and papers belonging to the prince, and seized at the time of his kidnapping; and, lastly, copies of a proclamation destined, it was alleged, to cause the garrisons in Alsace to rise. While the members of the commission were taking cognizance of all the documents, preliminary proceedings were already in full swing, every step being taken with the most odious haste, in order that the victim might not have the slightest opportunity of collecting his thoughts, and enable him to prepare his defence.

As an instance of this, the judge-advocate called on him while he was still in bed, in order to question him for the first time. Hardly had this examination been reduced to writing, when it was laid before the commission. It concluded with a formal request of the Duke that he be brought before the First Consul, and for the suspension of the preliminary investigation. It was therefore suggested that the First Consul be written to, but the Duc de Rovigo, who was present, strongly opposed the idea. He argued that such a step would run counter to the proposed goal; that it would greatly displease Bonaparte, and would be more likely to call forth all his severity rather than his indulgence; that duty must be performed before everything. Such is, at any rate, the story told by Colonel Bazancourt.

After a somewhat lengthy discussion, the commission unfortunately yielded to this almost peremptory order. It tried to make itself believe that the knowledge it would

acquire of the facts of the case would give greater strength to its intercession, for which better cause could then be shown. The commission therefore proceeded with its task, and the Duc d'Enghien was brought before it, and subjected to a second interrogatory. This interrogatory took place, almost in its entirety, in the presence of the Duc de Rovigo, who sat behind the president's chair.

Colonels Barrois and Bazancourt, both on the commission, have moreover stated that they lost no opportunity to impress the prince with the necessity of denying the facts with which he was charged, and especially of his not confessing to a fixed determination to bear arms against France and to serve under the British flag. Their advice was not heeded. The prince persisted with courageous frankness in admitting that such was his intention, but indignantly denied everything that might lead one to suppose that he in the slightest degree gave his adhesion to any attempt at murder. Together with this frank statement, he renewed his request to be brought into the presence of the First Consul, and, in this connection, his utterances were noble and touching.

There is reason to believe that in reaching French soil he had preferred a similar request. His examination over, he was taken back to prison. According to custom, the sitting was held with closed doors, and the judges were asked by the president if the facts seemed to them proved. They are to be seen such as they are recorded in the *Moniteur* of the 22d of March; but who can, after proceedings so enveloped in darkness, guarantee that truth was respected even in so solemn a publication?

The judges having declared the acts proven, they were next asked by the president what punishment could be meted out, in accordance with the Code. A lengthy discussion ensued on this point. Colonels Barrois and Bazancourt

were in favor of applying an article of the Code which only provided for imprisonment. The other judges were equally desirous that it should be so. Even then the sentence would have been utterly unjust. In spite of this, the conclusion was reached that the law clearly provided for a sentence of death in the case of the facts that had been proven.

There is every reason to suppose that the judges inclined to this belief, owing to the prince's declaration that he was firmly resolved to continue serving against the present government of France. He had declared himself on this point in the most energetic fashion, even adding "that he had recently asked for a command in the English army, and that as long as the usurping government existed, one might expect to find him under the flags of the powers ready to wage war against it. It was a duty imposed on him by his rank, and by the blood which flowed in his veins."

Such a declaration could have no other effect than to create an unfavorable impression on the minds of military men; but, at any rate, it disposes of the fable, so carefully spread by some of Bonaparte's agents, that the prince had written to him asking him for a command in the French army.

Assuredly there was nothing in this noble and courageous avowal which could afford legal grounds for sentencing him. He was merely giving expression to an intention, and when was an intention ever held to be a fact? Had the prince been arrested sword in hand? Had he been arrested on French soil? Could the sincerity of his language leave the shadow of a doubt on his protest against being even suspected of having participated in any attempt at murder?

Attention must be paid to an important omission in



the drawing up of the sentence. It is easy to find proof thereof in the *Moniteur* of the 22d of March, 1804, already quoted. It is that of the ordinary clause, *the judge-advocate will cause the sentence to be carried out within twenty-four hours.*

The members of the commission which tried the Duc d'Enghien, and in particular Colonels Barrois and Bazancourt, have always maintained that they had persisted in their refusal to allow this order of execution to be inserted in the sentence. Its place was consequently filled by another injunction, for which there was no precedent, viz.: *The judge-advocate shall at once read the sentence to the condemned man in the presence of the guard under arms.* Not to omit a single detail, it remains to be added that the Duc de Rovigo still contends that the text of the sentence, such as printed in the *Moniteur*, was not the actual one; that it was drawn up afterwards; and that the first copy of the minutes of the sentence, minutes signed by all the members of the commission, bore that *the execution was to take place immediately.*

This document was subsequently found. It appears that it was kept by General Hulin himself. How then can be explained that the mention of this order for an immediate execution is not to be found in the official portion of the *Moniteur*? Might it not be for the reason that one could not avoid seeing that such a prescription was not in sufficient accord with the letter of the law, which sets forth that no sentence passed by a military commission shall be carried into effect without having been brought to the knowledge of the divisional military commander, and ordered by him?

The formal order, generally given to the judge-advocate of a military commission, would thus have to be interpreted to mean that the commission should refer the matter to the

military commander, in order to obtain from him the necessary orders.

On the other hand also, the formula — *the judge-advocate shall at once read the sentence to the condemned man, in presence of the guard under arms* — was it not hit upon and suggested as being equivalent to the order for an immediate execution, and as a substitute for it?

The members of the commission have always protested that the draft embracing the order for an immediate execution was not, in spite of their having subscribed to it, the one which they intended to adopt finally, that it was to have been destroyed, that it was preserved inadvertently, and that the only authentic one, the only one filed in the record, is the one, copy of which is to be found in the *Moniteur*. It still remains to be said, in order to make complete this series of iniquities, that this record, which should have been in the archives of the Ministry of War, was removed therefrom, and no trace of it has been found. If the judges are to be believed, they consequently felt certain that the reading of the sentence, such as they pronounced it, did not carry with it the order for execution, which could only be proceeded with, after a copy of it in due form should have been delivered to the divisional military commander, whose orders could alone cause the soldiery to take action. Thus, by neglecting to deliver this copy to him immediately, they believed they could gain the time necessary to take the steps which their sense of honor and their conscience demanded of them.

As soon as they had pronounced sentence, they unanimously decided upon writing to the First Consul, in order to lay before him the prince's request that he be brought into his presence. They intended begging him to accede to this request, and to end their letter with a strong appeal to his clemency.

General Hulin proceeded without further delay to indite such a letter; but, while he was at work on it, the Duc de Rovigo, who had entered the court-room, asked what they were writing, pounced upon the general's pen, and tore it from his hands, at the same time addressing the members of the commission collectively in the following terms: "Gentlemen, your occupation is gone. The rest concerns me." Then, leaving the court-room hurriedly, and slamming the door after him, he left the unfortunate judges positively dumbfounded.

Nevertheless, they were about to renew their discussion as to what they should do or attempt, and General Hulin was leaving the building to step into his carriage, with the intention of driving at once to Malmaison, when he met General Savary walking ahead of the Duc d'Enghien, whom he was leading down the stairway.

His first idea was that the prince was merely being taken to the court-room to have his sentence read to him. All the same, he went back to his colleagues. He was hardly by their side, and was giving them his impressions, when a report of musketry fire was heard. The days of the august victim had been cut off. Close upon this, Savary made his appearance in the court-room once more, but this time pale and disconcerted. He told them that all was over, adding: "It must be admitted that he died like a brave man; but why was he against us?" To sum up, it will be seen that in the first place the execution was carried out without any formal order on the part of the commission, if, at least, one is to believe the official copy of the sentence wherein no mention is made of such an order, and next, without the president having delivered a copy of the sentence, which, according to law, should have been given to the judge-advocate, and which, beyond doubt, should have been transmitted by him to the military commander-in-chief.

It must not be lost sight of that the law leaves to this commanding officer alone the care of fixing the place and hour of execution, and the number of men to take part in it. Is it likely that such a duty could be imposed on him without his holding some authentic document establishing the fact that he was acting only by virtue of a legal requisition, and that he was allowing the soldiery under his orders to take part in an execution by virtue only of a judgment rendered in due form?

There is no room for doubt that the copy of the judgment was not signed by General Hulin before ten o'clock on the morning of the execution; in other words, four hours after it had taken place. I am as certain of this incident as one can be of a thing which one's own eyes have not witnessed.

What is singular and exceedingly strange in this unfortunate affair is that the men who seemed desirous of saving the prince, were precisely the judges who sent him to his doom. From the very first they committed an error which could not be retrieved, viz. the one of declaring themselves incompetent to try a prisoner, over whom, setting aside the privilege of his august blood, no tribunal in France had any jurisdiction, as he was not arrested on French territory.

It is evident that their deplorable weakness was to lead them where it did from the moment they lacked the courage to bear the loss of their rank, and suffer a three months' imprisonment. According to their account, the measures they took to give themselves time to intercede were completely set aside, first by the zeal of the judge-advocate, evidently in harmony with Savary, who did not fear taking upon himself to require the execution; next, by the haste shown by Savary in obeying this requisition.

No doubt can exist that he received a peremptory order

to hasten the final issue. He certainly did not act on his personal responsibility, but carried out the order he had received with the most fearful and culpable fidelity, for, as shown, he trampled under foot, not only the custom in such matters, but even the formalities and the most imperative regulations.

Moreover, three hours were all that was necessary to obtain from Malmaison an answer to the pressing request made by so noble a victim, of being at least allowed to see the man who held his life in his hands.

Savary did not see fit to grant this three hours' respite to the last offspring of the family of the great Condé, and it was a soldier who so coldly shed blood so thoroughly French, and so illustrious! He even had the grave dug several hours before sentence had been passed. He himself led the prince to execution, and lowered himself to presiding over the details of the execution. He leant against the parapet of the moat while it took place. It was he who saw to it that all trace of it was removed, and he came from it carrying the effects of the dead man; for, unless I am mistaken, he reached Malmaison holding in his hand the watch belonging to the prince, and a letter which the latter had entrusted to the officer commanding his guard, with the pressing request that he should see that it was delivered to Mlle. de Rohan.<sup>1</sup> This letter, a last token of his affection, was accompanied by a lock of his hair.

All the foregoing particulars concerning the arrival of the Duc de Rovigo at Malmaison were given to me repeatedly, and always in the same words, by Mme. de Rémusat, who was then in attendance on Mme. Bonaparte. Their truth, therefore, is indisputable.

<sup>1</sup> Three days later, the letter and the parcel came back into the hands of M. Réal, through the president of the commission, General Hulin. How had they travelled in this direction? I know not, nor do I know if they ever reached their destination.



Such is then the part taken by the Duc de Rovigo in this bloody tragedy. He never felt either qualms of conscience or worry over it. Everybody has read the pamphlet he published in 1824 or 1825, wherein he repeats the admissions previously made on a memorable occasion. While in St. Petersburg, after the Treaty of Tilsit, being entrusted with the mission of announcing the arrival in that city of M. de Caulaincourt, Napoleon's ambassador, the following is the manner in which he defended himself against the imputations cast in that capital on the future ambassador, in the matter of the death of the Duc d'Enghien. "You are mistaken," he said. "It is true that it was Caulaincourt who had him kidnapped; but it was Murat who had him tried, and I who had him executed."

Did this formal order, which he so punctually obeyed, come to him from Murat, or did he receive it directly from the First Consul? Did Murat take upon himself to give such an order, or did he merely carry out the instructions which reached him from Malmaison, and the confirmation of which was once more brought to him by Savary himself?

If I am not misinformed, the letter of which he was the bearer is still in the possession of Murat's friends, and it contains the most formal orders, not only to have the duke tried and sentenced, but not to suffer any delay to occur in his execution, and to anticipate all necessary preparations. Considering that this letter exists, and I have strong reasons for being sure of it, it will sooner or later see the light of day.<sup>1</sup>

It is hard to believe that Savary knew nothing of its contents at the time of its being entrusted to him, and that he did not at least receive some formal order from the First

<sup>1</sup> It is probably in the possession of M. de Mosbourg, Murat's Minister of Finance at Naples.

Consul. Would he have shown so much zeal to a mere injunction from Murat? Would he, after meeting M. Réal, have returned so full of confidence to Malmaison, had he thought that the First Consul would feel displeased with the news he brought?

What is to be thought of and deduced from this mission of M. Réal? It is impossible for me to doubt its existence. At the time when I was informed of it by the Duc de Rovigo and M. Réal, neither had any motive for deceiving me. Neither of them were in the least concerned about the part they had taken, and they consequently did not seek to distort the facts. To them it was merely an historical fact which they narrated naïvely, and from which they deduced separate conclusions.

M. Réal, ever ready to see plots in everything, inclined seriously to the belief that great trouble had been taken to prevent him from holding the interrogatory, by means of which, he alleged, he could have obtained much information that would have proved disagreeable for a good many people of prominence; and being an old friend of Fouché, and his creature, his hatred for M. Talleyrand was great, and he had brought himself to believe that there existed some treachery on his part, some understanding between him and the conspirators abroad, upon the track of which he might have got, had the prince been heard. According to M. Réal, it was therefore quite natural that, in order to head off this danger, M. de Talleyrand had contributed by his councils and by secret manœuvres to hasten the issue.

The Duc de Rovigo maintained that M. de Talleyrand, having provoked more than anybody else the kidnapping and the trial of the prince, had been, above all things, anxious to see him condemned and executed; that to the last he feared some weakening on the part of the First Consul, and that he had dreaded the influence of certain

counsels contrary to his own, and receiving the support of Josephine's entreaties. From that moment, persevering in his object to render Bonaparte irreconcilable with the House of Bourbon, he not only persuaded him to tolerate no delay in the trial and the execution, but even forced from him the orders sent to Murat, and personally called on the latter to teach him his lesson, and to conquer the scruples which his weakness of character ever gave reason to dread.

Indeed, I have had given to me very positive information concerning Murat's refusal to obey the first order transmitted to him, regarding which he gave utterance to the following words, in the presence of some of his intimate friends: "Are they seeking to soil my uniform? I will not tolerate such a thing."

It was found impossible to obtain from him, in accordance with this first order, that he should appoint the members of the military commission and call it together, and Bonaparte was compelled, a few hours later, to send to him from Malmaison the names of the officers who were to form part of it. The list of these names formed perhaps a part of the dispatch brought to him by Savary. Perhaps also the special object of M. de Talleyrand's visit had been to obtain his signature, which he ended in giving.<sup>1</sup> These several incidents explain the two meetings of the Duc de Rovigo with M. de Talleyrand, at Malmaison and at Murat's, on the day preceding the fatal night.

When the Duc de Rovigo, in the course of conversations with me, was thus throwing light on the conduct of M. de Talleyrand, he in no wise intended to cast blame on him.

<sup>1</sup> Murat was not, as it has generally been sought to make people believe, present at the execution. I am, moreover, certain that he did not go to Vincennes, and did not even leave his Paris residence. Besides, he was, at the time, rather unwell, and confined to his room.

The relations existing between them at the time were most friendly, and M. de Talleyrand had then no more active and zealous defender against the prejudice and mistrust of the Emperor. What is then to be finally and fairly believed? It is not possible to suppose that the First Consul was foreign to the orders which Savary so hastily carried out. He had certainly willed and ordered himself all that was done. Not only did he will it, but he had not heeded repeated entreaties, asking him to listen to the voice of mercy.

In order to be proof against yielding to these prayers, he had closeted himself in his study during the greater part of the day preceding the execution, and had given orders that no one should be admitted.

However, his wife went in to see him, and I have it from M. de Rémusat, who was acting as chamberlain on that day, and whom she almost compelled by force to open the door to her, that the most lively scene took place between her and her husband. He vouchsafed no other answer to her entreaties than the following one: "Begone! You are a mere child, and do not understand anything about political exigencies." And again, on awaking at five o'clock in the morning, he said to Mme. Bonaparte, who lay beside him: "By this time the Duc d'Enghien has ceased to live." She became hysterical, and cried a great deal. All the sympathy she got was: "Come, now, try and sleep; you are childish." It is she, who at eight o'clock, furnished these particulars to Mme. de Rémusat.

How can one admit, after all this, that the mission entrusted to M. Réal was sincerely meant? He was the bearer of a four-page letter of instructions, dictated by the First Consul himself.

This fact came to me, in the first place, although indirectly, in a burst of confidence on the part of M. Maret

himself, and, since his death, I have been shown a letter which he wrote to Murat on the night preceding the judgment. In this letter, preserved by Murat's friends, M. Maret informs him, in the most positive fashion, that he has just sent, by order of the First Consul, M. Réal, Councillor of State, with the necessary instructions to guide him in his interrogatory of the Duc d'Enghien, with which he is commissioned. And yet, no time was allowed the man who was to be subjected to this questioning to submit to it. Bonaparte was in too great a hurry to await its taking place, so anxious was he to end all, and in sending one order post haste on top of the other, he rendered the complete execution of some of them impossible.

Is it so very hard to realize the hesitation and the irresolution which must have struggled together in the mind of the man who finally came to so odious a determination? There are certain deeds which must cause mental perturbation, in spite of the most hardened policy. The perturbation felt by Bonaparte was, nevertheless, soon got rid of. So far from any word escaping his lips, either at the time, or during the following days, which might give to understand that he had been served beyond his desire, he, on the contrary, loaded with favors his principal advisers and tools in the matter. It is, however, but fair to state that those least well treated were the members of the military commission. All, or nearly all, of them remained stationary in their rank, and did not gain any promotion until several years later, a sign that their behavior had not given satisfaction.

The crime consummated, Bonaparte at once busied himself with devising means to derive advantage from it. With the object of making it appear less odious, it was necessary that it should be looked at in the light of an indispensable measure for the protection of the State. His



obstinacy in never belying himself in this respect is all the more remarkable that it endured to the close of his life. His will, wherein he speaks as follows, is a proof of it:—

“I had the Duc d’Enghien arrested and tried, because it was necessary to do so for the safety, and in the interests, of the French people, at a time when the Comte d’Artois openly admitted that he had sixty paid assassins in Paris. I would do so again, in like circumstances.”

And yet, in his later years, Napoleon never lost a chance of throwing on M. de Talleyrand’s shoulders the responsibility of the influence he had exercised over him in the matter. While at Elba, he charged him with the full weight of it, in the presence of some Englishman or other, who has embodied his remarks on the subject in an account he gave of his visit to the island.

At Saint Helena, he spoke in a like sense to O’Meara, with the object that O’Meara should commit his words to writing. He almost dictated his explanation to M. de Las Cases. It seems that he dictated it without reservation to M. de Montholon. Previous to this, at the time of his rupture with M. de Talleyrand, when he took from him the post of high chamberlain, in 1809, it is a fact that during the violent scene that took place between them on this occasion in the presence of several people, his advice to kidnap the Duc d’Enghien, and to send him to his death, was one of the deeds of perfidy which he most furiously cast in his face.

It is hard to judge of the worth of recriminations between two men intimately associated for so long, whose rupture was so marked, and one of whom ended in so severely punishing the other.

Unfortunately for M. de Talleyrand, his letter to the Minister of Baden is an anticipatory apology of the crime, and if one may justly argue that the unfortunate officers

ordered to try the Duc d'Enghien should have declared themselves incompetent, how is it possible to concede that M. de Talleyrand, that a man bearing such a name, and holding such a position, should not have hesitated before he wrote such a letter?

With regard to Bonaparte, I am convinced, in spite of his words, that remorse for the deed haunted him. It followed him to the brink of the grave, and it is the poignant recollection of the crime which dictated to him, in his will, the oft-quoted sentence wherein I can find nothing but an obstinate determination to preserve to the end the attitude enjoined upon him by his pride.

M. de Montholon has told me that this sentence was not embodied in the will at first, and that Napoleon inserted it two or three days before his death only. He then asked for his will of its custodian, opened it, made this addition to it, and carefully sealed up the will himself, without permitting any one to get a sight of what he had just added.

The desire of taking advantage of so solemn an opportunity to make the Comte d'Artois bear the weight of the accusation contained in that sentence, the thought that this accusation would prove the best possible excuse for his own deed, would seem to be the motive governing this crowning act of infamy.

What I can certify to is, that having gone to London in 1825, and having seen the will, I found in it the confirmation of M. de Montholon's assertion. The sentence having reference to the Duc d'Enghien had evidently been interpolated subsequently to the first draft, between two other sentences, and it had even been a matter of difficulty to find space for it.

Nothing can equal the stupor which reigned at Malmaison during the days succeeding the calamity. Bonaparte

was at his wits' ends to dissipate it, and I have it from Mme. de Rémusat that it would be hard to conceive the trouble he condescended to take, during the days following, in order to make himself less repulsive.

It was all in vain. The deed was done, and it was to strike further and deeper than he had anticipated.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A most remarkable fact was confided to me, shortly after its occurrence, which characterizes in a distinctly particular fashion the effect always produced on the mind of the Emperor by the memory of the Duc d'Enghien's fate, whenever it was recalled to him.

It was during the Hundred Days. The Duc d'Angoulême was being held prisoner by M. de Grouchy, in spite of a formal capitulation. General Belliard came into the presence of the Emperor just as the news of this reached him. The Emperor made all the greater haste to communicate it to the general, as he was aware that the latter had on several occasions expressed feelings of esteem and of attachment towards the Duke, and that previous to the 20th of March, their intercourse had been pretty frequent.

"So," said Bonaparte to him, "your friend the prince is under arrest, and Grouchy is sending him to Paris." — "But there was a capitulation," exclaimed Belliard. "Why is it being violated? And especially, why should the prince be brought to Paris? It would be most unfortunate, were this done, and I beg your Majesty will countermand it. There is yet time to do so. The Duke has announced his intention of going to live in Spain, and there is no reason to prevent him." — "And why, Sir," replied the Emperor, "should I not profit by the advantages which fall in my way? Wherein do you see that it is so great a misfortune for me to keep in my possession so precious an hostage?" — "In the first place, there is the violation of a capitulation," answered Belliard, "and this constitutes in itself a most unfortunate beginning for the re-establishment of your government. And then, who knows what may happen? There is the danger which the prince may incur while passing through France in the present excited state of the popular mind. On the one hand, some would venture all to rescue him, while others would be equally determined to leave nothing undone towards preventing his gaining his freedom. And, were he to perish in the struggle between the two parties, have you not cause to dread such a death, recalling as it would that of the Duc d'Enghien?"

At these last words, the face of the Emperor underwent a complete change, and assumed an expression terrible to behold. He paced up and down his study several times, and then, coming to a halt in front of the general, he angrily muttered the following words: "Yes; you are probably right. There is no objection to his going to Spain." Then came the freezing "Good day, Sir," and the slight bow, which, when Napoleon was in his worst moments, was the signal of dismissal.

As too much cannot be done to clear up the truth with regard to events of such magnitude, and the part taken by each one in them, I subjected the man who seemed best fitted to stand all tests, to one, and I must confess that he did not come out of it to his credit.

In 1814, when M. de Caulaincourt, after the 30th of March, published a defence of his co-operation in the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien, I ventured to blurt out to M. de Talleyrand that I was still in the dark with regard to some of the details of that unfortunate affair, although I had obtained many important particulars from the lips of the Duc de Rovigo. I then referred to the fatal mistake caused by the report of the man sent by Marshal Moncey to Ettenheim. The impassible face of M. de Talleyrand thereupon became contracted as I had never seen it before. He did not answer a word, and, as a matter of course, I put a timely stop to my questioning.

But, on the other hand, I have from M. d'Hauterive the following, the truth of which he vouches for. According to him, M. de Talleyrand is said to have furnished the Duc de Bourbon with a proof which satisfied the latter. Its purport plainly established the fact that no sooner had it been determined to arrest the Duc d'Enghien, than he dispatched a messenger to Mlle. de Rohan to inform her of this decision, and to supply her with the means of saving the prince. The messenger, it would seem, was delayed by accident or by sickness at Strasburg, and thus reached his destination too late. On the strength of such proof, — I am still speaking according to M. d'Hauterive, — the Duc de Bourbon restored M. de Talleyrand to his good graces, and the fact remains that he has since been frequently invited by the prince.

And yet, the story of the messenger is not an impossible one. It may be, at all hazards, that in spite of so many

steps undertaken towards quite another goal, it entered into the mind of a politician of that stamp, to have in reserve a resource which might some future time prove serviceable. This would not be the only occasion in his life when he had recourse to a similar precaution. But then, the illness of the messenger, this untoward accident, can they be believed in? Was M. de Talleyrand the one actually to incur so great a danger as the one likely to result from so positive an act of treachery on the part of a man in his position? A messenger does not travel unnoticed. Messengers have frequently been intercepted, and France's Minister of Foreign Affairs knew this better than any one else.

In support of the likelihood of this episode, M. de Talleyrand may claim that he never was cruel, and indeed no act stamped with cruelty has ever been formally laid to his door. It may be, therefore, that he experienced a feeling of remorse, which caused him to take the step which he subsequently knew how to turn to his advantage.

M. d'Hauterive, although anxious to shield him, could not help acknowledging to me that on the day the *Moniteur* informed France of the crime of Vincennes, the news it contained filled all the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the most fearful consternation. None of them, it would seem, had anticipated such an issue. M. d'Hauterive was one of the higher officials of the department. He went downstairs, *Moniteur* in hand, and asked to see the Minister. His principal colleagues had done likewise, and they met together at the entrance to M. de Talleyrand's closet.

When the latter made his appearance a few minutes later, it was impossible for him, upon entering the room where he was being awaited, not to be struck with the painful impression stamped on every face, and especially with the



look of indignation he could read in M. d'Hauterive's eyes. "What is the matter with you? Why are your eyes standing out of your head?" he said to him quickly. "What is the matter with me?" answered M. d'Hauterive. "Why, the same as must be the matter with you, if you have read the *Moniteur*. What an abomination!" — "What then, what then!" replied M. de Talleyrand. "Are you crazy? What is there to make so much fuss about? A conspirator has been arrested near the frontier, brought to Paris, and shot dead. What is there so extraordinary in all this?"

I learnt the news, at the Comédie Française, in the course of the evening. I was strolling about the stage during an *entr'acte*. Mlle. Contat called me, led me to her dressing-room, and there, letting herself drop into a chair, burst into tears, saying: "The Duc d'Enghien was shot this morning. Hardly anybody knows of it yet, but I am sure of it. Whither to fly, whither to hide oneself?" I could not credit it. But M. de Talleyrand's answer at the ball given by Mme. de Luynes at once sprang to my mind, and I left hastily, in order to procure further particulars.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, the news was being cried in the streets. After an hour, the cries were silenced, by order. Public indignation was seen to be rising as they pursued their calling. "The death of the Duc d'Enghien," said Fouché, "is worse than a crime. It is a blunder."

## CHAPTER VIII

Trial and sentence of Cadoudal, Moreau, and Polignac—Commutation of Moreau's penalty—The *salons* of Mme. Pastoret and of Mme. de Beaumont—Charm of the social gatherings of the period—M. de Chateaubriand and Mme. de Beaumont, the daughter of M. de Montmorin—France falls into disfavor with the rest of Europe through the execution of the Duc d'Enghien—Advantages derived therefrom by the British party—Bonaparte created Emperor—Motives inducing Pope Pius VII. to come to Paris to crown Napoleon—The new power given legitimacy to by religion—The third coalition against France—Admiral Villeneuve—M. Daru—The camp at Boulogne raised, and the sudden moving of the army into the heart of Germany—The Battle of Austerlitz—France's state of enthusiasm—Entry of M. Pasquier as *maître des requêtes* into the Council of State.

THE first result of the outrage perpetrated at Vincennes was to change, in a most marked fashion, public sentiment with regard to the conspiracy of Georges, Pichegru, and Moreau. At the time it was laid bare, all sympathy had gone out to the First Consul, and the arrest of Georges was considered a piece of good news. But, after the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, the horror inspired by the crime, a horror increased by the suspicions which the death of Pichegru gave rise to, public opinion quickly underwent a change. It was no difficult matter to recognize this at the time the great trial began.

The manner in which the trial was conducted brought much sympathy to the greater number of the accused men. All of them showed remarkable fortitude, and several of them admirable devotion to the cause they served. The youth of Messieurs de Polignac rendered this devotion all

the more touching. Georges gave proof of great character. There was something noble in the manner in which he spared Moreau, whose waverings had, to all appearances, caused the ruin of all. Moreau was greatly inferior to Georges; still, he rose to the situation on the last day of the trial. He was ably defended.

Stringent precautions were taken by the police to prevent within the precincts of the court, and about its approaches, an explosion of popular feeling in favor of the accused men, especially in the case of Moreau. The zeal of General Savary once more broke forth on this occasion in a manner only too prone, not only to excite more fully the feelings of those who bore an attachment of some kind or the other towards the accused men, but also of that great mass of citizens which requires, as a first guarantee of its dearest interests, that the authorities should at least show some respect for the independence of the courts of law.

No sooner had the judgment been rendered, when a universal feeling of pity was shown for the condemned men. In the case of General Moreau, it was but too clearly seen that the penalty of imprisonment imposed on him was merely a compromise between the desires of the First Consul, who would have liked to have seen him sentenced to death, leaving the right to pardon optional with himself, and the conscience of the judges, who had found strong presumptive evidence against the general, but who could not discover sufficient proof to justify them in pronouncing a sentence of death.

Nevertheless, men in government circles pretended to believe that Moreau had escaped such a sentence merely owing to the intrigues of his friends with the tribunal, where their principal mainstay was the brother of the General Lecourbe I have previously spoken of in the matter of the Concordat, as one of Bonaparte's most persistent foes.

The First Consul commuted the penalty of imprisonment into one of banishment to America. Moreau, a free man in America, was less to be feared by him than Moreau, a prisoner in France.

The courageous efforts made by all those surrounding Bonaparte to obtain the remission, or at least the mitigation, of the penalties inflicted on the other prisoners cannot be passed over in silence. Mme. Bonaparte, the ladies of her household, Mme. Murat, the officers of the household, the *aides-de-camp*, the generals commanding the Guards, all joined in this action. M. de Rivière was spared, owing to the entreaties of Mme. de Murat, while Messieurs de Polignac owed the mitigation of their sentence to Mme. Bonaparte, supported by Mme. de Rémusat.

It was, moreover, impossible for the First Consul to see that a certain amount of indulgence was necessary in order to calm the too patent exasperation aroused against him by the events which had happened in the last four months. Hence he showed himself, in the matter of pardons, as generous as it was compatible for him to be. It was thought that even Georges might feel the benefits of his clemency; but Bonaparte could not bring himself to furnish such a weapon against himself to a man who had made such persevering and rabid attempts on his life.

The death of the Duc d'Enghien completely changed the disposition of many Royalists towards Bonaparte.

Previous to the crime perpetrated at Vincennes, many among us were arguing that it was time for us to emerge from the life of obscurity and idleness to which we had been relegated for the past fifteen years. We had had time to feel how dangerous it was to allow power being handed over to those unfit to exercise it. The government had been wise and sagacious enough to encourage these sentiments.

Generally speaking, the prefects of the departments had shown great consideration towards the oldest and principal landowners. The new methods of conducting elections; these elections of presidents of *cantons* made from the ranks of the most honorable men, whatever their antecedents; a small quantity of concessions, albeit of little importance in themselves, but bearing the sign of intentions at variance with those which had for so long a time governed matters, had contributed greatly towards leading us into the new path thus opened. We entered upon it by slow degrees, but still we entered upon it.

The presidency of my *canton* led me to the electoral assembly of Le Mans, and I was nominated for the *Corps législatif*. This happened in the autumn preceding the conspiracy. I therefore went to Paris, if not resolved, at least strongly tempted to have myself appointed by the Senate a member of the *Corps législatif*. It would have been an easy matter for me to succeed. I had the support of a few influential men, among others, Tronchet, one of the defenders of Louis XVI. The *Corps législatif* was presided over by M. de Fontanes.

We met in a few *Salons* wherein the scattered elements of French society were beginning to reassemble. For a long time, the house of M. de l'Étang, whose fortune had escaped all the measures of the Revolution, was the only meeting-place, even during the darkest days, of the survivors of the literary and learned world, and of the few foreigners who feared not the risk of coming to our distracted country. Mme. de Pastoret did the honors of her uncle's *salon*. She was endowed with much natural wit, in spite of a sorely neglected education, and shone brilliantly in the distinguished circle which was that of her husband and of her uncle. Messieurs de Talleyrand, de Montesquiou, and de Pange, were among those who most assiduously culti-



vated her. She was in the habit of saying everything that came to her mind, and in so original a fashion that one forgave her everything. For a long time a faithful pupil of Rousseau, she had no other principles than those of the philosophical school. Later on, after being admitted to the society of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, the many examples of the highest virtues she there met with inspired her with feelings of piety which clung to her till her demise.

At the time I first became a visitor to her house, her husband, one of the *fructidorisés* deputies, was abroad. I met there M. Cuvier and M. de Humboldt, who had just returned from America (he surprised people by his variety of information, and his inexhaustible fund of speech, which was doubtless admired, but of which one soon tired); M. Suard, the worthy representative of the intellect of the old Académie française; M. de Vaisnes, one of the survivors of the Duc de Choiseul's social circle at Chanteloup; Mme. de Staël, Mme. Cottin, Saint-Lambert, Mme. d'Houdetot, and Mme. de La Briche, together with M. Molé, her son-in-law. The latter was then but twenty years of age, but he was remarkable by the elevation of his mind, to which was added a fine and noble presence.

The return of the *émigrés*, checked for a while by the 18th Fructidor, was resumed, owing to the feeling of security inspired by the consular government. I met once more many gentlewomen of fashion whom I had known previous to 1792, viz. the Duchesse de Montmorency, Mme. de Caumont, Mme. de Contades, and the Princesse de Vaudémont, *née* Montmorency. She had married a prince of the House of Lorraine, and was allied to almost all the reigning families of Europe. Passionately fond of society, she was not very particular in the choice of her acquaintances, and indulged in the belief that her long pedigree gave her a right to impose all her whims. In her *salon* were to be

met men of all parties, to wit, M. Fouché and M. de Talleyrand, who guaranteed to her political immunity, M. de La Valette, *aide-de-camp* to the Emperor, and the most uncompromising Royalists.

During the space of thirty-five years, all foreigners of distinction, all the members of the diplomatic corps, enjoyed her intimacy. She knew every secret, but she never betrayed a confidence, and never was unfaithful to a friend. Her faults and her caprices were those of the times, and harmed only herself.

I came to make the acquaintance of Mme. de Beaumont in the following way: I had let her have the apartments which I occupied in the rue de Luxembourg. The charms of her manner and her superior intellect soon drew me to her. She was the daughter of M. de Montmorin, one of the last ministers of Louis XVI. The régime of the Terror had dealt her heavy blows, for her father, her brothers, and her sisters had perished on the scaffold. Alone of her family she had survived its horrors, hidden in a cottage in the neighborhood of Montbard. On her return to Paris in quest of the remnants of her fortune, she soon surrounded herself with a picked social circle. I must name as its most shining light, Mme. de Vintimille, one of the best educated and most intellectual of women. She possessed, moreover, the most elevated and sound judicial mind of any person I have ever come into contact with. Of no one else's friendship have I done myself so proud, and no other has ever formed so great a part of my life. Mme. de Saussure would often come with Mme. de Staël, whose life she has since written with so much talent, and with the imprint of a sincere affection. M. de Fontanes was another of the habitués, also M. Joubert, whose intimate relations with Mme. Beaumont were of a touching and devoted nature. He was a superior man, broad-minded, and

endowed with a natural originality, void of all affectation, reserved, and never seeking to display himself. I must likewise recall Messieurs Guéneau de Mussy, Chênedollé, and Molé, among those who almost daily called between seven and eleven o'clock of the evening at the rue de Luxembourg. Lastly, there was M. de Chateaubriand, who was to fill so great a place in the life of Mme. de Beaumont.

The principal charms of these gatherings lay in the indulgence and complete freedom presiding over them. The joy of meeting once more smoothed away all difficulties. Shades of opinion and opposite views which would never have been endured previous to 1791 were tolerated. All quarrels, hatreds, and ill feelings, which were to live anew during the Empire and the Restoration were put on one side.

We enjoyed life in those days, free from such plagues and without restraint, and could speak of everything with no other curb to our words than that of respecting the sentiments of others. I know of hardly any subjects which were not handled in this little *salon*: home and foreign politics, past and present; the nature and the worth of the several constitutions; the religious requirements of the new society; lastly, classical literature, the great masters of the time of Louis XIV.; the literature, the renascence of which was being heralded by *Atala* and by *Le génie du christianisme*; and, to crown all, lively discussions regarding the respective merits of Mlle. Georges and Mlle. Duchesnois.

I will here give a copy of one of Mme. de Beaumont's letters, because it portrays the society which I am trying to describe.

July 16.

I owe you an apology, Sir, for having so long delayed answering you. Unfortunately, my excuses are but too good, as all my time has been taken up with business and leave-takings.

M. Julien and I are all that remain of the social circle in which you found pleasure last winter, and we are forever saying to these rooms which are so proud of their former visitors : “ D plorable Sion, qu’as-tu fait de ta gloire ? ”

They are soon to be deserted. In a few days I am going to take the waters. I do not know what effect they will have on me, but their virtues will indeed be great in my eyes if they succeed in getting me out of the state in which I am. It is by faith ye shall be saved, and so I must believe. I am trying to do so. M. Joubert left only three days ago. He was in a pretty flourishing state of health.

I have at last breakfasted with Mlle. Duchesnois, and am literally charmed with her. I am unable to forgive those who find her stupid ; she is simple, na ve, and absent-minded ; but, if you once succeed in attracting her attention, you quickly see her eyes sparkle, her face become more beautiful, and she discourses pleasantly and with few words. She grasps full well all things that are properly submitted to her ; all that there is to do is to touch the right chord. She conducts herself with the greatest dignity with men, and is very respectful to women. Such behavior is certainly not that of a stupid person. I do not expect to see her act again previous to my departure, and I had so looked forward to seeing her as Ariane ! You may picture to yourself my disappointment.

I hope that the formidable Geoffroy will not come and persecute me as far as Mont-Dore. I shall find enough boresome and importunate people there without him. You happily do not know, Sir, how all these jaws down in Auvergne can wag. Had Samson come across one of them, he would have done far better work, and the Philistines would never have been heard of any more. As long as I am not compelled to frequent them, it is all I wish for. After the society I am leaving, there remains nothing worth enjoying except solitude, for it is a means of finding it again.

I must not conclude without thanking you for writing to me in so very *beautiful a hand*. I had no trouble in deciphering every word, and no greater praise can I award to you. It goes once more to prove that you have a reserve fund of compassion for your neighbor’s ignorance.

Adieu, Sir. I beg you will accept the assurance of my tender feelings towards you. I shall be most happy if ever we are all once more united.

M. B.

In spite of our all being in various ways sufferers from the Revolution, although it was still the object of our strongest reprobation, although we remained the devoted adherents of the Royalist cause, we began to feel that the time was fast approaching when it would become us to stifle our feelings of distaste and aversion, in view of the necessity of encouraging and helping any government showing itself sincerely animated with the desire of restoring order in France, and bringing about a return to those principles which could alone guarantee protection to society.

It was impossible not to give the consular government credit for its good intentions. We were all fairly well disposed to take advantage of any opportunities that might be offered us to emerge from our isolation. M. de Chateaubriand accepted the post of first secretary of legation under Cardinal Fesch, France's ambassador in Rome. Mme. de Beaumont followed him to that city, after a brief sojourn at the waters at Mont-Dore, whither she had gone to stay the ravages of consumption, which was rapidly killing her. She died in Rome, a few months later.

M. de Fontanes had called the First Consul's attention to the talents of M. Molé; as to myself, I felt disposed to take his advice, and to take advantage of the interest which both he and M. de Cambacérès showed me.

The death of the Duc d'Enghien came and put an end to all these good intentions.

Not only did I decide upon ceasing all advances, but I begged all those whom I had approached in this connection to forget that I had spoken to them about such matters. M. de Fontanes, in spite of his anxiety to introduce into the Chamber over which he presided men who shared his opinions, and with whose sentiments he was in sympathy, could but approve of my determination. He had himself just



performed an act of courage, the memory of which deserves to be preserved. Some one had taken the liberty of altering in the *Moniteur* some of the words he had spoken in his address to the First Consul, and to substitute others which seemed to give his sanction to certain doings of the government. On the following day, in spite of the entreaties of his friends and relations, who trembled for his fortune, he did not hesitate to demand of the editors of the journal the insertion of an *erratum* stating what he had actually said. The reward of so noble a behavior was everybody's respect. Moreover, as ever happens in such cases, the man to whom it gave most offence was compelled to bow to public sentiment, and to stomach the lesson without a word.

Shortly afterwards the Emperor, noticing that M. de Fontanes looked downcast, said to him: "You are still thinking on your Duc d'Enghien, are you not?" — "So are you," was his rejoinder. On yet another occasion, when the Emperor was communicating to him the account given by his minister at Vienna of the report of a talk he had had with the Emperor of Austria, and having added: "You see how he judges the event." — "What does it prove?" said M. de Fontanes. "Well then, what does it prove?" repeated Bonaparte. "That you are going to be Emperor of Germany within a year," quickly answered M. de Fontanes.

The same sentiments which dictated this language to M. de Fontanes caused M. de Chateaubriand to resign the post he was to fill at Sion, while M. Molé postponed the carrying out of his plans. Thus we all went back to obscurity, without our having taken any concerted action.

Throughout Europe, the impression created by the death of the Duc d'Enghien was profound. It was especially the case at St. Petersburg. Paul I. had passed away, and his demise had almost severed the somewhat narrow bonds, which, in the last year of his life, had been formed between

him and the First Consul. His successor resented without restraint, and with all the indignation of a great soul, the blow which had just been dealt all sovereign families.

Every cabinet had manifest cause to complain of this violation of the law of nations. The Emperor Alexander gave expression to his feelings in a particularly severe fashion. It at once became evident that British policy would soon find a new ally in this direction. Austria, although less outspoken than Russia, gave, nevertheless, sign of an unfriendly disposition towards France. In Prussia likewise, the death of the Duc d'Enghien caused a revolution in men's minds.

I have it from M. Portalis, then first secretary of the French legation in Berlin, that never did he witness more lively and more genuine joy than that shown by Frederick William, when suddenly bursting in upon the queen, and telling all who were present of the arrest of Georges in Paris. The news had just been brought to him by a special messenger. But the news of the outrage, which quickly followed, gave quite another bent to his ideas. His indignation, smothered by policy, did not burst forth like that of the Emperor of Russia, but it was none the less real.

The First Consul was compelled to take notice of this indignation, the explosion of which was full of dangers. Through M. de Talleyrand, he ordered his ministers in foreign countries to send him faithful bulletins of public feeling in their respective localities.

At Berlin, M. Portalis was entrusted by the ambassador with the task of drawing up the bulletin, but the truths it contained were so hard and unpalatable that the ambassador (M. de La Forest) entertained doubts as to the advisability of forwarding it to Paris. However, he finally made up his mind to do so, but he abstained from signing it, merely enclosing it as an annex to his dispatch.

After a fortnight had gone by, M. de Talleyrand wrote to him to cease sending these bulletins. Several months later, after having been received by Bonaparte, who had become Emperor (this took place at Mayence) the ambassador thought he had the right to ask M. de Talleyrand why he had been treated so coldly. The latter replied: "What else can you expect? Those infernal bulletins of yours are to blame, but I will make him listen to reason, and the matter will blow over."

To return to Berlin. The British party had still a stronghold in that city. It made good use of the new state of feeling, and was powerfully seconded by the queen, who had the support of almost all the important and distinguished men of the country. To say the very least, Prussia was strongly wrought up, and Pitt was about to renew the strongest and most formidable of coalitions. The new Emperor was busily engaged at Boulogne in preparations for the invasion of England, just as a terrible storm was about to burst.

Feeling convinced that before entering upon so great a struggle abroad, it was necessary to render more secure the crown which he had just placed on his brow, Napoleon omitted nothing that would tend to enhance its prestige, nor to create new interests which would be bound up with its maintenance and defence.

It will be remembered that on assuming imperial dignity, he had announced that the question of its becoming hereditary would be submitted to an expression of the popular will. Registers were opened in all directions for that purpose. The result of such an appeal could not be open to doubt. Strength was added to it by the Church's consecration. It was on this occasion that he derived the greatest benefit from the consideration he had shown for the Holy See, from the Concordat which he had concluded with

it, and from the credit he had given himself in the eyes of the Holy Father of being the restorer of Catholicism in the finest of his domains, the kingdom of France.

It was already noticed, at the time of his promotion, that the archbishops were the first to tend him their congratulations. He asked the Pope to come and consecrate him in Paris. The request must have been the subject of considerable debate in the Roman Council, and it is unnecessary to say what were the thoughts that filled His Holiness's mind at such a proposition. Still he had plenty of precedents bequeathed to him by his predecessors. They were of ancient date, it is true, but they were none the less to the point in the eyes of the pontifical cabinet.

What assuredly guided Pius VII.'s decision, in spite of his natural disinclination, were the advantages which he believed the cause of religion would derive from so signal an act of personal condescension. He did not know of any duty more incumbent upon him than that of getting back for the Church of France, as much as lay in his power, the favors, the power, and the glory it had enjoyed in its palmyest days. Ere he could attain this object, or even come near doing so, he had much to ask for, much to obtain. It became especially necessary for him to win over the man who disposed of Italy's fate, whose legions were within a ten days' march of the capital of Christendom, and of whom a refusal might make an open foe, while a consent might forever bind him to the holiest of causes. These important considerations made away with the Pope's reluctance. He came to Paris, and Bonaparte was consecrated in December, 1804.

As a matter of course, the Emperor had taken all possible steps, in order that the pomp of his consecration should be invested with the importance of a ceremony, the spectacle of which had not been given for so many years to the nations of the world.

He set himself to giving greater importance to all institutions surrounding him. He gave a more solemn consecration to that of the Legion of Honor, and created posts, titles, and ranks, with which to reward those who had up to that date served him the most usefully and the most faithfully.

He made Marshals of France of several of his officers. This dignity, the memory of which was essentially monarchical, seemed truly to be one of the necessary adjuncts of the crown. The creation of this rank caused a great stir in the army. Bringing, as it did, every ambition into play, it gave the chief of the state an opportunity of showing, in the selections he made, that merit, in order to reap the highest reward, must be coupled with undoubted fidelity to his person.

On the occasion of his consecration, he likewise organized his Court with that imposing pomp which excited Europe's wonder. He made renewed attempts to attract to it all the bearers of illustrious names of old France whom he could win over.

Never was there any ceremony more full of pomp,<sup>1</sup> nor more extraordinary. The presence of the Sovereign Pontiff and the Roman clergy gave to it a character of grandeur. Religion, only a short while ago persecuted and proscribed, towered above all other powers, and was alone capable of giving the triumpher whom it crowned a sort of legitimacy. What a profound revolution in the course of ideas and in

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon gave orders to commemorate by a magnificent work, embellished with all that engraving and printing could produce in greatest perfection, the various incidents of this ceremony. The work was prosecuted without respite, but so much care was bestowed on it that it was not completed at the time of his abdication. It is a remarkable fact that orders having been given during the Hundred Days to resume work on it and to hasten its completion, the whole edition came into the hands of the Royal Government, in an entirely finished state, after the Second Restoration. There had not even been time to begin the distribution of it.



the march of events! Where was the man who did not believe that from that day on the alliance entered into between the Imperial Crown of France and the Roman Pontificate would endure for many long years?

And yet, on the day following Bonaparte's consecration, there was a break in the state of harmony existing between him and the Pope. It is a fact that the falling out became a marked one at once, and that it continued to assume increased proportions up to the time of the Pope's departure, and this, to such a degree, that the presents intended for him were never delivered.

In this respect, France was far from entering into the sentiments of her new master. Profound veneration and feelings of sincere attachment were shown the Sovereign Pontiff. Crowds flocked into all the churches. There was an immense concourse of people under the windows of his apartments in the Tuileries; and, when he was returning to his states, there was the same eagerness to see him, and the same proofs of respect followed his parting steps to the last. The sojourn of the head of the Church in France contributed greatly to revive religious sentiment, and, in this respect, left behind traces which have not been effaced.

The fruits derived by the Emperor from the papal consecration proved of infinite value to him, and to the end of his career he experienced its benefit. It silenced opposition, and justified submission to the state of things, by enjoining it. What right had a Frenchman to understand his duties differently from the head of the Catholic Church? What could the Royalists say, who, up to that time, had never separated the cause of royalty from the cause of religion?

Whatever may have happened afterwards, whatever the part I may have taken later, nothing will prevent me from saying to-day that, after 1805, Bonaparte was the legiti-

mate sovereign of France in the eyes of the nation taken as a whole.

It is an easy matter to imagine the effect produced in Europe by the consecration and the coronation. It is certain that the event seemed for a time to lessen the opposing efforts of the enemies of Bonaparte, henceforth to be called the *Emperor Napoleon*. But the clever intrigues of Mr. Pitt and British gold triumphed over this hesitancy, and while the new Emperor was having himself consecrated King of Italy, while he was adding Genoa to the French empire, while he was giving the principality of Lucca to one of his sisters, and was organizing the state of Parma as a dependency of France, Russia and England had already entered into an alliance against him. Austria was soon to join it.

Prussia still remained undecided, at least to all outward appearance. This alliance constituted the third coalition which France had to face.

The territorial increases which I have just enumerated, were, it cannot be denied, justified by the repeated and recent increases obtained by Austria, England, and Russia. The matter is plainly and forcibly set forth in a memorandum which I found in the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of which I will here give the text. Preceding it is a letter enclosing the document. It is couched in the following terms:—

Sir, the Emperor has dictated to me the enclosed memorandum, which he has ordered me to transmit to you.

*Signed: E. MENEVAL, private secretary.*

Saint-Cloud, 10 Thermidor (June, 1805).

*Memorandum for M. d'Hauterive.*

The Emperor desires that M. d'Hauterive should write a short pamphlet entitled: *Changes that have taken place in Europe during the last twenty-five years*, with the purpose of making known:

England's gains, either by territory in India, or by commerce, or again by its innovations in maritime legislation ;

That Sweden and Denmark no longer amount to anything ;

Russia's gains through the partition of Poland, in the Crimea, in Georgia, at Corfu, through its influence in Wallachia, in Moldavia, in the Morea, and through its occupation of the Phasis ;

That Prussia, in spite of what it may say, has become a second-rate power ;

Austria's gains through the partition of Poland, the concentration of its forces, the acquisition of Venice, the annihilation of the Porte against whom it was formerly compelled to keep a standing army, as the Porte has no longer any power, and as the Georgians create a diversion on its frontiers.

France's gains, its losses through the new doctrine which England has caused to be adopted with regard to the navigation of the high seas, the declaration of the Porte, its natural ally, and lastly the loss of its possessions in India and of the fine colony of San Domingo, this latter one almost lost to it forever.

When M. d'Hauterive has written this pamphlet, he is to come and read it to the Emperor.

The pamphlet was begun, but not finished. Probably the Emperor attached less importance to it in the turmoil of events which were soon to lead him to the battle-field of Austerlitz.

Bonaparte was at Boulogne, when he learnt at one and the same time of the first setting in motion of the Austrian army, and of the return to Ferrol of the French squadron commanded by Admiral Villeneuve. This squadron, which had left Toulon with all indications pointing to operations against the British West Indies, and with the object of getting itself followed, by deceiving them as to its destination, by the greater part of the British naval force, had fully carried out the first part of its mission. It had retraced its steps after a call at Martinique. It remained for it but to rally the French and Spanish squadrons which lay in readiness to follow it, in the ports of Ferrol, Rochefort, and

Brest. Thus strengthened, the squadron was to make a sudden appearance in the Straits of Dover, where it would have found a British fleet greatly inferior to it in numbers. It might, in consequence, if not overpower it, at any rate so disable it, that the passage across the channel would have been free for a few days.

The success of the landing would have thus been rendered almost secure, and the arrival of this squadron was awaited by the Emperor with the liveliest anxiety. Although most cleverly conceived, this plan of campaign was thwarted by a British squadron which intercepted Admiral Villeneuve off Ferrol.

I was told what follows by M. Daru. The Emperor sent for him the moment he received the bad news that his admiral, on leaving Ferrol, had shaped his course towards Cadiz, instead of toward Brest, as he had been instructed to do. M. Daru was compelled to listen to the Emperor's most bitter invectives against the incompetency and bad management of the unfortunate Villeneuve, whom he was probably blaming beyond what he deserved.

But, this first burst of anger having subsided, M. Daru received orders to take a pen and get ready to write. Thereupon, the great general, at once dismissing from his mind the subject of his recent irritation, renouncing the plans he had pondered over for a couple of years, and to which he had devoted so much care, so many efforts, and so large a sum of money, gave up his mind to an entirely new order of ideas, and entering into the state of calmness necessary for him to combine his plans, dictated at one stroke all the orders necessary for transporting into the heart of Germany the army whose camp could be seen from the British shores. These orders embraced every detail, and revealed wonderful forethought. The number of marches, the locating of each and every corps, and their position on

the vast battle-field which was to unroll itself to them, were calculated with the utmost precision. Never, perhaps, did the genius of military operations on a large scale, strengthened and animated by a force of character rising above all events, manifest itself to a higher degree. M. Daru, when telling me this, fifteen years later, was still dumbfounded with admiration.

So great and rare a talent had its due reward, for never was there a grander and more complete success than this one. The camp at Boulogne was broken up, and the French army was soon on the banks of the Danube. One might think that the whole of Europe was, for that army, but an enlarged parade ground. In less than three months from the dictating of that letter, the surrender of Ulm, a series of fights each one surpassing the other in its brilliant results, the taking of Vienna, crowned by the battle of Austerlitz, raised the glory of the French armies and of the Emperor, to a degree surpassing anything seen heretofore.

Mr. Pitt was so overcome by so crushing a triumph, that he conceived from it a feeling of despair to which was attributed the illness which shortly afterwards ended his career. Bonaparte was free to believe that the death of this statesman, whose policy seemed to be the only one capable of coping with his own, would deliver him from his most formidable enemy.

The state of peace following upon the battle of Austerlitz brought him to Paris in triumph. These were among the most brilliant days of his career. It could no longer be denied that he was the greatest general of modern times. He had demonstrated that victory was even easier for him in Germany than in Italy, and that he had left far away in his rear the exploits of the Pichegrus and the Moreaus.

Yet I can remember that even in those days, an officer of great merit, General Campredon, whispered into the ear of



a few trusted friends that the position in which the army had been forced to give battle at Austerlitz, was the result of a too rashly risked march, which victory did not wholly justify. And it is a fact that Napoleon was dragged into the fight, by a desire of supporting at all costs General Murat, who, after crossing the Danube, had ventured forward with the maddest rashness. And so, even in these glorious days, a trained eye could distinguish at that early date the weak side of this great military talent, and point out in advance the evils of that blind confidence which was one day to level the edifice of Napoleon's miraculous good fortune.

The question also springs to one's mind whether Admiral Villeneuve's defeat, which destroyed all Napoleon's hopes of crossing over to England, and which, in spite of his burning desire, kept him on French soil, does not constitute one of those remarkable examples of the good luck which, in those days, clung to all his steps.

And, indeed, what might not have happened to him, when once landed on the British shore with the pick of his troops, while master of the seas for necessarily but a short time? What would have become of France if Austria's huge army, under Prince Charles, emerging from Bavaria, had deployed its forces on the banks of the Rhine, which it would probably have crossed, for one cannot discover the forces which could have made any effectual resistance?

France would have been invaded, and, in the midst of this terrible conflict, what would have become of its divided parts? On which side would have lain the greatest danger? The only answer to be set against these questions is the one he himself gave to several persons who took the liberty of submitting the situation to him, viz.: "If my landing had been crowned with success, the enthusiasm aroused thereby in France would have been such that the

women and children of Strasburg would have sufficed to repulse the Austrians." Does not such a reply seem more brilliant than sensible?

A sense of happiness and the intoxication of success took hold of all France. People rushed from every corner of the Empire to Paris, in order to see the conqueror and his new Court, and to gaze with admiration upon its festivities. A great social event, which deserves to be recalled, was a ball given by the Marshals at the Opéra on a grand scale, and with much magnificence. All the most prominent people of the capital were invited to this ball, no distinction being made in favor of pedigrees. The Emperor honored the ball with his presence, and showed particular attention at this great reunion towards the element belonging to old France, evidently seeking to win it over to him. He labored to attract it to his Court, and was desirous of seeing it accept the highest offices.

This Council of State served him well in this respect. It was an excellent school. The ideas which the former Royalists might bring into it were no disturbing element, for its majority was devoted to the new ideas. The Emperor often presided over it and watched its doings. During the preceding year he had conceived and put into execution the idea of *auditeurs*, which he in the first place selected from young men belonging to the best families, and who possessed both means and brains. M. Molé was one of these. Through him I became familiar with the nature of the work.

I felt that the duties of *auditeur* were hardly consistent with my age, and with the rank which I had held in the magistracy, so I was about to go and spend the summer season on my estate (this was in June, 1806), when I learnt of the coming creation of *maîtres des requêtes*. It did not seem extraordinary, when viewed from the standpoint of our

old magistracy's hierarchal ideas, for a councillor of the Parlement to become a *maîtres des requêtes*, so I thought that I could properly accept such a position.

Ever since the *radiations*, the erasure of the names of the *émigrés* from the list of those proscribed, I had remained on good terms with M. de Cambacérès, who was now arch-chancellor, and president of the Council of State. I chanced to be invited to one of his dinners, and this gave me an opportunity of broaching to him the subject of the approaching creation of the *maîtres des requêtes*. He divined the mood I was in, urged upon me to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered me of returning to public life, pointed out to me the advantages to be derived therefrom, and told me that he would see to it that my request should be favorably entertained, were I to decide upon preferring it. I begged him to allow me to think the matter over for a few days, as I wished to consult with my friends and relations.

The need which I had experienced two years earlier of emerging from my state of idleness, and which a fearful occurrence had caused to disappear, had made itself felt once more. It was not, however, without great hesitation that I determined upon taking this step. I feared the discontent of the society in which I lived, and in which were many intolerant persons who would not bring themselves to overlook the step I was going to take. But there were so many strong reasons to oppose to their criticisms. Was it possible to forget one of the hardest lessons taught us by the Revolution? Had it not taught us that our reason commanded us to sacrifice our repugnance in order to work, with all our might, against the return of such calamities as we had seen? Was not the best method, the only one perhaps of attaining such a result, that of bringing back to the fold of the government the men who could help it to resist

revolutionary ideas? Did wisdom consist in repelling the advances made in this direction by the government, when it showed that it felt the necessity of such a *rapprochement*? How to resist the desire of not frittering away one's whole life in a state of absolute inaction? Were there not already many examples worthy of imitation?

So I called on M. de Cambacères, who undertook to present my request, and I was appointed *maître des requêtes* on the creation of the new institution. From that day, I entered on a new path, and, without ever abandoning my principles, facts have oftentimes presented themselves to my mind in a light different from the one in which I had been accustomed to look upon them till then. I have nothing to dissemble in this connection, and, in the course of the narrative which is to follow, I am going to pass judgment on myself as sincerely as on others. But I am of opinion that I should state that once having taken service under the imperial government, and having made up my mind to do so only after grave deliberation, and because it seemed to me that I was acting as rightly and as serviceably towards my country as towards myself, I served that government in all sincerity and loyalty, and without any mental reservation.

The cause of the House of Bourbon was the cause of misfortune, and had received my first attachment. I belonged to it by my birth, by my convictions, by the sacrifices I had made. It was impossible for me not to preserve the profoundest sympathy for it; but I had come to the conclusion that if this cause should ever triumph again, it would be at a very distant date, and after events which it was impossible to foresee. The best interests of my country seemed to me, therefore, clearly to demand that every means at one's disposal should be utilized towards bettering, by aid of one's support, the existing order of things,

and to bring it into the best possible harmony with the principles of sound reason and eternal justice.

Such was the law I laid down to myself upon joining the Emperor's Council of State, and I hope that I have never wittingly deviated from it.



## CHAPTER IX

France's state at the birth of the Empire — Organization of the imperial régime — Absolutism dominant — The deliberative assemblies — The freedom of the press and the liberty of the subject — Happy results abroad of the battle of Austerlitz — Negotiations for a marriage between the Princess Amélie of Bavaria and Eugène de Beauharnais — Confidential letter from M. de Talleyrand to M. de Thiard regarding this union — Rapid elevation of the members of the Emperor's family — Joseph, King of Naples — Murat, Grand-Duke of Berg — Louis, King of Holland — Naval engagement off Trafalgar — England's supremacy on the seas — Devoted adherence of the clergy to the Imperial Crown — France's new organization — The twofold legislation necessary towards constituting society — Private influences welcomed by Napoleon — Lebrun and Cambacérès — Fouché painted — M. de Talleyrand's public and private life — M. Portalis, Senior — M. Maret, Duc de Bassano — M. de Laplace — M. Chaptal.

I CONSIDER it timely to throw a light on the general situation at the period when I began to take an active share in public affairs.

For some time past, absolute power had been established on a firm basis. Such had been the work of the Revolution, as, for a long while public authority had been in the hands of a few individuals, who had exercised it to the vexation of the rest. At the period which we now reach, this power was undoubtedly centred in one man. Napoleon had finally succeeded in getting it into his hands, by winning over some, by making playthings of others, and subjugating all with his uncontested superiority. While retaining the shibboleths of the Revolution, he had shown his skill in partly destroying its work. Its promises were no longer anything but mere words, yet, in spite of all his

deceit, the country, instead of feeling angry with him, daily showed him increased confidence. As an instance of this, the deliberative assemblies, the Senate and the *Corps législatif*, continued to exist after the 18th Brumaire, preserving the while their republican labels. Formerly, they disposed of all things, and everybody bowed to their mandates. Now, they were nothing but the docile instruments of the hand which governed them. A senatorial commission existed, ostensibly for the purpose of securing the freedom of the press; while in reality the press was never more muzzled. Another commission was supposed to watch over the freedom of the subject, yet prisoners of state were not unknown. True, the number of them was not as great as one has been led to understand; yet they were detained without trial, and were the victims of the most arbitrary measures. There remained but one thing of the inheritance handed over to him by the Revolution, which the new head of the government took over and defended with the utmost sincerity, and that was the private interests created by the Revolution, the security of which he guaranteed.

Thus, all positions and fortunes acquired during the past thirty years were not only confirmed, but augmented, at least those of such men as went over to him unreservedly. It was in this fashion that he succeeded in laying hands on everything, on the civil service, justice, army and navy, and the public coffers. Peace reigned at home and glory abroad by virtue of this concentration of power.

God forbid that I should become the apologist of such a system, but France had been driven to take refuge under its protecting wing. France's good fortune willed it that the man whom she had permitted to seize upon so much power was strong enough to shoulder the burden. Had, for instance, Napoleon died on the battle-field of Austerlitz,

or lost his life by one of the plots hatched against him, the chaos of anarchy would once more have taken hold of France, and anarchy may well be styled the worst of despotisms. France would doubtless have become a victim to internecine strife, and would have seen the outbreak of rival ambitions, whose struggle would have led to fearful results.

Most fortunately for the country, the life of this most necessary man seemed at that time as safe abroad as it was at home. Abroad, the results of the battle of Austerlitz had greatly increased his power, which was looked upon as being all the more firmly established from the fact that he had, in making terms of peace, been shrewd enough to secure important advantages for his allies, thus seeming to credit them with a good-will which existed more on the surface than in reality. He had thus gained, even in Germany, the good-will of a puissant party on whom he might depend for good and useful service. By enlarging Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and the Duchy of Baden with a considerable part of the territory he had wrested from Austria, he had elevated the two former to the first rank among kingdoms.

The Elector of Bavaria had won this mark of high favor in a special fashion, by consenting to the marriage of his daughter, the Princess Amélie, with Eugène de Beauharnais, Napoleon's adopted son. This matrimonial alliance was the first of many which the members of his family were to contract with the sovereign houses of Europe. It is worthy of note that this union laid the foundations of the most solid of fortunes which came to the new imperial house of France, and which best withstood the reverses which humbled its head in the dust.

An exceedingly curious document revealing the manner in which this affair was managed, fell into my hands, and so I subjoin it in a footnote. It is a letter written by

M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to M. de Thiar, *chargé d'affaires* at the Court of the Elector of Bavaria. The arrogance of style and the pretensions to be read between the lines of this document are too characteristically significant for it not to deserve some attention. It will be seen from it that negotiations in the matter began shortly after the taking of Ulm, and previous to the occupation of Vienna, which occurred on the 13th of November, and a long time before the battle of Austerlitz, which was fought on the 2d of December.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PARIS, 17th Brumaire, Year XIV.  
(October 8th, 1805.)

To M. de Thiar:

(This letter was written in cypher.)

I have to acknowledge, Sir, your two letters, of the 15th Vendémiaire, and of the 2d Brumaire, having reference to the matter I spoke to you about. From what you say to me it is plain that the special negotiation you are engaged in is daily acquiring greater importance, and becoming more and more pressing. It is time to reach the goal at once.

The stumbling-block you have found in its path is certainly of a nature to inspire one with a fear of some kind of resistance which may have some grounds for its being, or may be merely a pretext. But your suggestion, that it be got rid of by appealing for that purpose to the Elector of Baden, is not to be thought of. So indirect a proceeding cannot be taken into account, as it is beneath the dignity of a Court like ours.

A successful intrigue in such matters cannot be acknowledged, while an unsuccessful one would be difficult and even impossible to keep hidden. The only becoming line of conduct to be followed is to broach the matter to the Elector of Bavaria himself. You will ask a private interview of him through M. de Montgelas, and you will then in plain terms propose to him matrimonial alliance between his family and that of His Majesty. The Emperor has given proof of his desire to protect the House of Bavaria, and he can offer no better and no more lasting guarantee of his sentiments towards the Elector. The Emperor has no marriageable prince in his own family. Young Beauharnais can settle down to matrimony, and when this occurs, His Majesty will do for him all that he would do for one bearing his name. His Majesty has already made known his views with regard to the succession to the throne.

The *senatus-consultum* having reference to the imperial accession has made it plain to all Europe that the heir presumptive, in the princely branch, is Louis. This disposal of the succession, so fully settled upon, places the Prince de Beauharnais (I may even now give him this title) in a particularly advantageous position. He is brother-in-law of our Imperial Prince, uncle of the heir presumptive, stepson of the reigning Emperor,

It was not without some anxiety that thoughtful minds watched the Emperor's persistent attempts to work at the elevation of the members of his family, an elevation which gave all the more cause for anxiety that, in order to main-

and only son of the Empress: so much for rank; to all this are to be added all the advantages to be derived from such a position.

As regards the Elector, his position will be made secure forever, and strengthened with a most plausible prospect of all such progressive aggrandizement for which the future may afford opportunity. He will acquire a powerful protection against the jealousy and ambitious designs of the great Courts, of his rivals, and of his neighbors. As to the Princess, a condition of life, which the most liberal sovereign in existence will be pleased to create with a magnificence in harmony with his feelings of affection, and an establishment in regard to which her wishes and those of the Elector shall be fully taken into consideration, as regards the shape it is to take, its location, its extent, and lastly the benefit she will reap of coming to Paris at a time when good taste, elegance, and dignity are calling back the French nation to all the refined enjoyments of the mind, and of herself selecting from a new Court the persons and means most fit to re-establish its empire. Such is the light in which you are to present the successful issue of the direct negotiation which you are hereby commissioned to transact with the Elector.

The reverse aspect of the case is easily understood. A refusal, or a show of repugnance, would be the hardest thing in the world to palliate or repair. The most powerful prince in Europe, while a man of the highest elevation of character and magnificent in the display of his affections, is at the same time irreconcilable when contradicted, and he possesses in common with the rest of mortals greater power to do harm than to do good, and he does not admit of any obstacles. His strong will embodies all the advantages and disadvantages which its possession brings to mankind. There is no need for me to go into detail as to the consequences emanating therefrom, and to point out their possible application, in order to make my meaning perfectly clear to the Elector of Bavaria. But I have particularly to beg you will draw his attention to the inevitable consequences of any indiscretion on his part, for this negotiation must ever remain a secret, except in the case of its success. A refusal would be tantamount to a misfortune which the Elector should seek to spare unto himself. The making of it public would but have the effect of hastening the evils which he then could not help calling down on his House. I do not see any objection to M. de Montgelas' learning of the matter, so you may tell him in detail of your doings, and consult with him as to whether it is better he should speak with the Elector before or after you. It will give the secret strength if he becomes a participant in it, for more than any one else will he feel its importance. If my direct intercourse, which dates far back with the Elector, and of which he is fond of showing me his recollection on every occasion, is liable to cause my personal opinion to influence



tain it, France might constantly find herself engaged in new wars, or at the very least embroiled in diplomatic difficulties of the most troublous kind. For instance, the kingdom of Naples had been wrested from the House of Bourbon, by way of reprisal for the more than ill-considered attack which King Ferdinand had ventured to make on the French troops in Italy, at the very time when he had bound himself by treaty to remain neutral between France and Austria. Following this conquest, which had merely been a day's work, the crown of Naples had fallen to the lot of the eldest of the Bonaparte family, the one known as King Joseph. It was on this occasion, if I am not mistaken, that for the first time the Emperor spoke the haughty words: "The dynasty which occupied the throne of Naples has ceased to reign." About the same period, the Grand-Duchy of Berg was created in favor of Murat, his brother-in-law; almost immediately afterwards his brother Louis was proclaimed King of Holland, following upon a treaty concluded with or rather forced upon the Batavian government. These three important deeds

his decision in any degree, then make use of my name in any way you may deem best. With regard to the obstacle which you have foreseen as likely to come from the Court of Baden, it seems to me that the simplest course is to suggest to the Elector of Bavaria that he give the hand of his youngest daughter to the Elector of Baden. The respective ages of the pair are not in contradiction with such a solution, and thus would all interests be reconciled. Were the Elector to offer you the hand of his youngest daughter, your reply would be that the respective ages of the pair are not in harmony, and you would not entertain the proposition. If you have the opportunity of speaking to the young Princess, or of getting some one to speak to her, get her on your side by encouraging her predilection for what is French. M. de Montgelas is to be informed of your steps, and take action on his own account. Tell him that it would be within the bounds of possibility to create the establishment of M. de Beauharnais out of the former territory of the House of Bavaria on this side of the Rhine.

I have the honor, etc.

*Signed:* CH. M. TALLEYRAND.

undoubtedly went beyond all rules of prudence, not to say those of a healthy policy.

A solitary enemy still remained, and that was England. It was, moreover, to be expected that Russia, although dissembling her intentions, would ere long become her ally.

Mr. Fox, who had succeeded Mr. Pitt, was soon to die, and with him was buried all hope of peace. England had lost within a year her two foremost statesmen, and was witnessing the breaking up of the last coalition formed by Mr. Pitt, but as a compensation for this check to her policy she could boast of the destruction of the French and Spanish naval forces at Trafalgar. The engagement had been fought in sight of Cadiz, at about the same time as the battle of Austerlitz, by Admiral Villeneuve, who had rallied the Spanish squadron commanded by Admiral Gravina. Moved to action by far too peremptory orders from M. Decrès, Minister of Marine, and anxious to retrieve his defeat off Ferrol, the unfortunate Villeneuve persisted in leaving the roadstead of Cadiz in spite of the presence of the English squadron under Nelson, and had prevailed upon the Spanish admiral to follow him. The engagement, although fought by the French and Spaniards in a most disadvantageous position, was a long and terrible one, and great valor was displayed on both sides. Nelson was killed in the hour of his triumph, Admiral Gravina succumbed to his wounds, while Villeneuve, driven to despair, took his own life a few months later. He had in vain sought death on the day of the battle. There is no question that with Trafalgar England's supremacy on the seas became and remained undisputed.

Alone, England could not attain anything on the Continent. It was necessary that she should have allies, and they were not to be found readily after so many disastrous campaigns. Nevertheless, she kept up an active inter-

course with Russia; but, in order that it should bear fruit, it was necessary to get Prussia to join them, for that country could alone furnish the battle-field. Prussia still enjoyed the prestige of the military creations of Frederick the Great. The campaign in Champagne had brought Prussia little credit, but its failure was attributed rather to bad political moves than to the unskilful handling of her armies.

Since then, the Prussians had shown some talent in the siege of Mayence; their troops were in a fine state of efficiency, yet officers versed in military affairs contended that an army whose noted generals were men from sixty to eighty years of age, and the greater part of whose young officers had never been shot over, was in a poor condition to cope with the young and virile army of France, which army had for the past fourteen years slept on battle-fields, and which had just surpassed itself in the campaign culminating in the victory of Austerlitz. Hence did the storm gathering in that quarter cause but small alarm in France.

At home, every show of opposition had been crushed. Bonaparte had inherited all the force and strength created by the Revolution, and was surrounded with a number of eminent men who no longer had any ambition but to serve him. The army was his beyond recall. Each day saw the scions of the best families, of those who up to that time had longest held aloof, enter the ranks. And indeed it was hard for a young man to witness such a harvest of glory, and not to wish to reap his share of it.

Positions in the civil service were beginning to be a source of ambition for all classes. As to the clergy, with the exception of a small number of dissentients, who might still cause a few consciences some little trouble, but which had no influence in the state, it certainly proved itself one of the most devoted auxiliaries, and so, one of those most

precious to the imperial crown. The papal consecration had, to its eyes, settled every question, and the charges given out subsequent to that date all bear striking proof of this. There is one of these which I have particular cause to remember, emanating as it did from the pen of M. de Broglie, Bishop of Ghent, at the opening of the Austerlitz campaign. I can recall that while praising Napoleon to excess, the noble prelate naïvely declared that he was an enemy to all adulation.

This favorable mood of the clergy bore nowhere more influence than in the western provinces, where the work of pacification was complete and civil war had become altogether extinct. Moreover, consequent upon the counsel and preaching of the priests, the departments which had so long fought the troops of the Republic supplied as quickly as elsewhere their contingents to the Emperor's armies. Great care was, moreover, bestowed in the administration of these departments. New roads were opened, and the same hand which restored the Place Bellecour in Lyons, built a new town in La Vendée.

Old France had been destroyed, and new France needed an organization. Everything was budding in the latter, and elements were not lacking, but nothing was in its proper place. It is easy to remark that the new chief of the state had this advantage on his side, viz. that no institution having taken root in France since the beginning of the Revolution, there was nothing standing in his way, and that he could therefore give free rein to his conceptions; but I really think that he would have considered himself more than fortunate had he been able to lay his hand on some old institution, on some time-honored social custom, even some national prejudice which had stood the brunt of centuries, and upon which he could have laid the foundations of an edifice.

More than once, it must be said in justice to him, he expressed his regrets to that effect, showing himself in this respect far superior to the men of talent who surrounded him, whose training had taken place during the Revolution, and who had derived from it their prejudices in favor of a general levelling, thus rendering all building up an impossibility. They were merely capable of destructive work.

Two things are requisite to constitute and organize a social system. It requires doubtless a written legislation in harmony with its material position; but, by the side of such legislation, there must be found an entirely different one composed of usages, customs, accepted ideas, and lastly, of manners, and this latter one is the only one which governs social life in so many cases where the laws cannot make themselves felt. Concerning written legislation, I have already pointed out with what happy results the First Consul had devoted his attention to it with the aid of his Council of State. As Emperor he could but pursue his work as First Consul, and it can be truly said that he never ceased giving his best attention to it. At the time of my entering the Council of State, the Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure were completed, and the Commercial Code was under discussion. The Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure were in course of preparation.

In a century where knowledge was widespread, at a time where for a period of almost fifteen years, every idea and principle of legislation had been publicly ventilated and discussed, when advantage could be derived from experience, when the Council could boast of lawyers of the first rank, such as Messieurs Tronchet, de Cambacérès, and Portalis, it could not be considered a rash undertaking nor one disproportionate to the means at hand to recast all the country's legislation.



The principal and real merit of the Emperor lies in having conceived the necessity of the undertaking, and in having pushed it forward with the activity characterizing all his doings, and which he had the faculty of communicating to others. The stupendous amount of work which he got out of his Council of State, during the first six or seven years, is sufficient to frighten one's imagination. Nor can it be denied that he knew so well how to apply his intellect to matters which must have been completely foreign to him, in such a manner that not only was his interference not out of place, but that he often brought to them most useful knowledge.

To turn to the other legislation, the need of which I have also pointed out, the one that is not made with nor learnt in books. With regard to this one, the difficulties were far greater, and, in the beginning, the Emperor stood almost alone in his views regarding it. Not only was he badly served, but barely understood by the majority of those about him. Some of them were governed by a blind fear of what was styled the old régime; the limited intellect of others did not permit of their conceiving that there was a mean to be preserved between this old régime, which their thoughtless wishes would have recalled to life, and that of the Revolution, which they justly held in execration.

Nothing was more difficult than to make the men of the Revolution understand that the only way of consolidating, and of securing against the vicissitude of events newly acquired positions and fortunes, was to make class distinctions *de facto* if not *de jure*, and to create within the higher or lesser ranks of the social order a certain number of those hereditary institutions by which a throne must of necessity be surrounded, if it is itself to become hereditary.

Most extraordinary was the state of mind of the men of the Revolution who had gone over to the Emperor. They

had fully accepted the idea of an absolute power committed to the hands of one man. The altitude of this power was so prodigious that it no longer dazzled their eyes. Moreover, at the time of their consenting to serve under him they had known enough to set a high price on their services. But, in order that the throne should not be for them a source of alarm, they would have liked to see it standing by itself, and they were irritated by the ranks which interposed themselves between them and the throne. But the man who occupied it was too shrewd not to understand that anything which stands alone and unsupported cannot last long in this world. He therefore sought props in all directions, securing them from the old as well as from the new France, for he was not the man to believe that ten long centuries had been actually wiped out by the events that occurred in ten years. It therefore became necessary and indispensable to bring about a fusion between the past and the present, and until such a fusion took place, it could rightly be said that the new work was not complete.

Among the men closest to the Emperor, and to whom some influence in his decisions may be attributed, were his consular colleagues, Messieurs Lebrun and de Cambacérès, who, at the birth of the Empire, had become respectively archtreasurer and archchancellor. It would be difficult to find two men of such opposite characteristics. The first named, a former secretary of Chancellor Maupeou, and the author of the truly remarkable preamble to the Chancellor's edicts of 1771, a distinguished man of letters, a charming translator of Tasso and of Homer, was a devoted adherent of all the philosophical principles of the eighteenth century, and he had embraced the Revolution of 1789 with all the ardor and good faith of an adept. He had not played any prominent part in it, although a member of the Constituent Assembly. A gentle and humane man, and a foe to all deeds

of violence, he deplored the evils which the Revolution brought in its train. He had a horror of its crimes, and despised those who committed them. Still, he could not help believing that the misery which these crimes engendered were at the very least atoned for by the inestimable benefit conferred by the abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, by the doing away with the old judiciary, especially the Parlements, towards dispersing which he had labored in 1791. He dreaded all religious power and influence, and if his peace of mind was still liable to be disturbed, it was from the fear of again seeing the advent of such a state of affairs. Lastly, no one has ever surpassed him in his dream of a state of perfect equality, and hence it is that the slightest encroachment on this equality in the matter of the division of an estate, seemed to him a monstrous thing. He was the father of a large family, and nothing could have induced him to give one of his children the slightest advantage over the others.<sup>1</sup> Titles and honorary distinctions were in his eyes mere playthings, and he could not help shrugging his shoulders every time he would see any store set on them.

When the First Consul took him as a colleague he was, since the 13th Vendémiaire, a member of the Conseil des Cinq-Cents, where he had always ranked among its moderate men. His line of conduct had been sufficiently cautious to save him from being transported, in spite of his intimate relations with several of the *fructidorisés*, notably M. de Marbois.

The selection of M. Lebrun as Third Consul was therefore looked upon as one of the pledges given by the Gen-

<sup>1</sup> It was the greatest difficulty, at least during the last years of his life, to induce him to consent to the settlement of a majorat, in order to secure for his son his place in the *pairie*, as his successor. I am even inclined to believe that this majorat was created by the son himself out of his own resources.

eral First Consul of the moderation of his intentions. It was also a valuable acquisition to his government, as he was highly educated, a good administrator, and possessed of a rare talent for writing, which more than once was put to good use. His most shining specialty was that of dealing with financial matters, of which he had made a searching study. It is true that his knowledge in this respect had been acquired perhaps to too great an extent in the purist school of economy, thus rendering its results less fit for application. Nevertheless, while still making liberal allowance for doctrinal exaggeration, there was still much to be derived from what he knew about questions of taxation, and especially about the public credit. Napoleon, who knew how to do justice to his talents, appointed him archtreasurer in the first days of the Empire.

M. de Cambacérès, Second Consul, and then archchancellor, was the very opposite of M. Lebrun. A councillor at the *Cour des aides* of Montpellier previous to 1789, he had been a personage of some importance in that body, and this importance would have been still greater, if to his public worth had been joined somewhat more dignified manners. A stranger to any system of philosophy, endowed with one of the most positive minds that ever existed, he had allowed himself to be carried away by the first waves of the Revolution, rather than plunging into them.

The advantages he could derive therefrom were counterbalanced by many dangers, which would doubtless have held him back, had it not been that the party of the Revolution was the strongest. His was a nature governed more by prudence than by courage. Nevertheless, he did not become a member either of the Constituent Assembly or of the Legislative Assembly. Up to September, 1792, he contented himself with filling, in the department of the Hérault, several judicial or administrative positions of

more or less importance. His political career really began on the day he entered the Convention. He soon made his mark by his remarkable aptitude for work, and by his genuine acquaintance with all questions of jurisprudence. He became a member of several committees, but it was the king's trial which drew public attention to him. His behavior during this trial affords some strange contradictions.

He began by declaring the king guilty, next denied the Convention's right to try him. After this, he voted for his imprisonment and even his death, but this latter alternative only in the case of a foreign invasion, and, to crown all, he asked that the sentence, which was one of death, should be carried out within twenty-four hours after it had been pronounced. The explanation of all these inconsistencies is to be found in the struggle of his mind between his pusillanimity and his conscience. In them are to be seen the vain efforts of a man of enlightened mind and timid soul not to become accomplice in a crime which caused him to shudder with fear, without too greatly endangering his own safety.

Never daring to employ, in order to attain this object, any other but indirect means, beginning with a concession which he did not dare to refuse to the exigencies of the party which was soon to win him over to its side, M. de Cambacérès tried to group together all the timid souls in sympathy with his own, and with this feeble support he thought to check unbridled passions. Convinced too late of the uselessness of this effort, he fell so low as to seek forgiveness for his badly managed resistance, and purchased this forgiveness at the cost of a cowardly desertion of the august victim whom he no longer entertained a hope of saving.

His obsequiousness towards the revolutionary party led



him to the post of Minister of Justice, a post he still occupied on the 18th Brumaire, and which caused him to be raised to the consulate. But if on the one hand such was the source of the high position he subsequently attained, there is no doubt that the recollection of those early years constantly poisoned all his enjoyments. The care he has taken to wash his hands of the death of Louis XVI. sufficiently shows that it has been the torture of his life. He has ever been alive to the fact that the measure of indulgence he stood in need of would not be readily granted to him by the men on whose final judgment the verdict of posterity will be based. M. de Cambacérès joined the consulate with a lesser feeling of security than M. Lebrun. His appointment, it must be admitted, was a sop thrown by Bonaparte to the revolutionary party, to the most odious and compromised men, and yet this man who attained power under such auspices soon became one of the most zealous partisans of a return to ideas of order and to monarchical principles about the First Consul. The judicial occupations of his youth, the study of law to which he had devoted himself, made him well acquainted with these ideas and principles, and his mind was imbued with them. Revolutionary life had caused him to put them aside, but without effacing them from his mind, and no sooner did the opportunity present itself to take them up again, than he grasped it with the prudent and discreet joy which constituted the basis of his character.

When later on he reverted to ideas of religion, no surprise was felt, even by those who had made him a study. The deviations which his conscience reproached him with were the cause of his hatred and detestation of the Revolution. His memory dwelt with pleasure on the times which preceded it. When in his private circle, he enjoyed recalling and extolling the advantages of the social organization

of those happy and tranquil days. The existence of the old magistracy was especially a subject of perpetual regret to him. In that, differing greatly from his colleague, M. Lebrun, he did not admit of a monarchical state without a nobility, without a clergy, without hereditary ranks and dignities, and without an uncontested transmission by right of primogeniture of an amount of wealth sufficient to secure to families the preservation of the honorary inheritance.

As these social combinations could not be borrowed from the old régime on which his thoughts were forbidden to dwell, he toiled diligently to have them emanate from the consular or imperial power, engrafting as much as he could the new creations on what remained of the old ones, fully aware, moreover, that it was the only way of obtaining perfect security for men in positions similar to his own. On this point, consequently, his ideas chimed in with those of Napoleon.

It must be said, moreover, that all the excellent reasons suggested to him in favor of this system by the perspicuity of his judgment and by his superior lights, derived additional strength from his pettiness of spirit, for he prized social distinctions not only because of their political worth, but also on account of the personal enjoyment he derived from them. Never did titles, crosses, and ribands give anybody more pleasure than they did him. His whole delight lay in displaying them. He was in the habit of parading with childish glee, not only in *salons* but even in public places, his orders in gold, pearls, and diamonds; yet, in spite of all this childishness, his was the best equipped mind in the Imperial Council. He was all the more a great lawyer in that his knowledge, although of considerable extent, did not govern him in absolute fashion, but obeyed the mandates of that exquisite understanding and superior intellect which alone make the legislator.

He enjoyed likewise the knowledge and perspicacity of a statesman, but he was far from possessing the firmness of character and will power which are the necessary attributes of a legislator. The secondary rôle to which he had been called did not indeed require these qualities. Still, there is reason to believe that had he shown a little more courage in expressing his thoughts, and more firmness in defending his opinions, he would on many occasions have induced the chief, to whose fortunes he had attached himself, to come to many a valuable determination. He rendered great service to him, and nobody ever deserved better the confidence he enjoyed at his hands.

While repeatedly the chief depository of his power, albeit in so far only as that power could be delegated, during Napoleon's frequent absences under the Consulate and the Empire, he ever exercised it with the amount of cleverness necessary for it not to suffer damage at his hands, at the same time revealing to no small degree the caution required so as not to give offence to the jealous touchiness of the man who was the fountain of that power.

M. de Cambacérès showed himself kind and inclined to be helpful in his intercourse with humanity, so far as his natural timidity would permit. He was ever faithful to his friendships, forgetful of injury, but never of services done, in that vastly the superior of his colleague Lebrun, who, egotistical and wrapped up in himself, had scarcely any thoughts but for himself and his family.

Next to M. de Cambacérès, two members of the ministry, Messieurs Fouché and de Talleyrand shared or exploited the confidence of the First Consul and of the Emperor. The other ministers, although men of great importance each in the sphere of administration assigned to him, never exercised more than a restricted influence on great questions of state policy.

M. Fouché, one of the *conventionnels* who had voted for the king's death, one of the most rabid proconsuls in the days of the Reign of Terror, was for a long time the veritable representative of the Revolution about Bonaparte. He it was who spoke on its behalf, and he was fully entitled to do so, for there were hardly any of its crimes in which he had not participated. He had become its accomplice coldly, dispassionately, and without any fixed object in view, living from hand to mouth in the midst of all its abominations, and never losing the presence of mind to see everything, notice everything, and remember everything.

The *directeur* Barras, with whom his relations had been of a very intimate kind, took him out of the ranks of the Jacobins, whom he had joined at the time of the commotion of Prairial, Year III., and after having entrusted him with several succeeding diplomatic missions, apparently in order to give him time wherein to get rid of his bad habits, finally made him Minister of Police. The 18th Brumaire found him at this post, and although the work of that day had been accomplished without his having a part in it, and, in some respects, without his knowledge of it, ever ready to be on the winning side, he had not hesitated to offer his services to the lucky general. Bonaparte showed just as little hesitation in accepting them, and in retaining M. Fouché as Minister of Police, he at one and the same time sought to give to the dethroned party the guarantee promised to it, to secure to himself the means of governing that party, by preserving a connection with it that would keep him informed as to its inner workings, and to obtain immunity from the attempts of the Royalist party by having a vigilant watchdog whose zeal in such a cause would be beyond doubt.

Nevertheless, Bonaparte's natural mistrust warned him never to repose entire confidence in such a man, and that it

would be necessary to set a watch on the man who was about to be entrusted with the duty of watching others. It was from that day that he began to employ several police systems exercising a respective check on each other, always trying to surpass each other in zeal, thus filling his mind, one against the other, with prejudices, the consequences of which were always serious.

M. Fouché's part was a difficult one, but it was the only one for which he was fit. Void of any solid education, incapable of conceiving two consecutive ideas and of diligently applying himself to any task, he never could have filled any other ministry than that of police, which is more carried on by conversation than by the work of the closet. It is sufficient to be acquainted with the intrigues of the day and their ramifications. In those days, it was specially necessary to be familiar with the names of many, and principally those of men whose life in the past gave cause to foresee what they might be capable of in the future. In this connection, M. Fouché's antecedents gave him all kinds of advantages. I have already stated that he had seen everything, known everything. I add that he cared seriously for nothing. Without affection for anybody, of a duplicity and of a perfidy never equalled, capable of sacrificing for the smallest interest the man who might consider himself the day before his best friend; possessing in the highest degree, if not the ability, at least the impudence of a liar; gifted with a light, superficial mind, often happy in repartee, and maintaining always the outward appearance of an imperturbable coolness, it cost him nothing to betray all those who had dealings with him, beginning with Bonaparte, though he had served him, in the first period of his elevation, with a fidelity that had all the appearance of devotion.

As the best way of retaining the good graces of so sus-



precious a master, and one so difficult to please, will ever be to make oneself necessary or act so as to create such a belief in one, it will be easy to form an idea of all the lying reports and of all the perfidious hints with which M. Fouché must have for so long, and especially during the first years, thrust upon the First Consul. Hence, how many fatal resolutions may there not be imputed to him, and how numerous are the excellent measures the execution of which he delayed, if he did not stifle them all together?

The man had not, it must be confessed, his equal in the art of making dupes, and he never practised this art more cynically than in the case of the Royalists and of the *émigrés*. For years I witnessed both parties, firmly convinced that they were subjected to severe treatment in spite of him, that it was the work of the chief of the state, that Fouché was their sole defender; and when, in after years, I was able to take cognizance of their reports emanating from his closet, and of the orders he had given, I discovered facts contradicting his assertions, in other words, reports almost always couched so as to envenom the simplest matters, orders of extreme severity, and all this signed by himself.

In the very beginnings of the Consulate, M. Fouché had met in the person of M. de Talleyrand a most formidable antagonist, and this circumstance caused a marked influence on his behavior. He showed himself all the more attached to the revolutionary party because his rival seemed to be disposed to act independently of it. One may well believe that in the case of two men of such calibre, it was not a question between them of principles or even of opinions. Long ago both of them had made up their minds to know no others save those appropriate to circumstances. The bone of contention between them was the possession of influence in public affairs and with the chief of the govern-

ment; the opportunity and means to govern him, to enmesh him, and to get all they could out of him for their own advantage. They had not yet had time to find out to what a degree their scheme was studded with difficulties, not to say impracticable. Of the two, M. Fouché took the longest time to undeceive himself as to their common mistake, and in that showed gross stupidity. With strange vanity, he thought that the First Consul would never be anything but a more firmly established *directeur* and with a more solidly constituted power than that of his predecessors. He was under the impression that the consular government could never be anything else than the extension of the government of the Revolution, only better defined and better carried out, and that the instruments called into use during that Revolution were, with but a few exceptions, the ones still to be employed.

M. Talleyrand's innate perspicacity, the advantage which he derived from his previous condition of life, of having seen things from a higher pinnacle, of penetrating their significance, of judging them with a more practised eye, had soon made him see that a victorious man of Bonaparte's mould was not going to drag along in the ignoble tracks of the men whose place he had taken; that he had higher ambitions; that although it might suit him to be the Revolution's heir, it in no way suited him to continue its work. His mind once settled on this point, the clever courtier, for M. de Talleyrand again became one from that day, neglected no opportunity of gaining the confidence of the man whom he wished to charm and captivate. Entering without effort, but never too brusquely, into what he might know or divine of his most secret views, he made the road easy to him, without appearing to trace it. This conduct met with full success, and brought to him who practised it an uncontested influence. The charm of his seduction was

all the more powerful for being clothed with manners which were rare in those days. Added to a natural wit, ever stamped with a piquant originality, M. de Talleyrand possessed the distinguished and easy manners of the courtier, of the *grand seigneur* of former days, and he greatly contributed to the taste which his master was soon to acquire for such manners. In this respect, he had the merit of coming forward as the natural and easy connecting link between old France and new France, between the old and the new régime. One thing is certain, and that is he could without danger be made use of for such a purpose, as there was no fear of his ever going too far. It would have been hard to meet with a man more on his guard than he was against a return to the former order of things.

M. de Talleyrand might remain content with a First Consul playing the part of Cæsar; but the throne of Bourbon was too formidable in his eyes, for him not to take good and special care to drive away from the mind of the First Consul everything liable to lead him to accept a part similar to the one which Monk had played on the opposite side of the Channel. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered him great facilities for warding off such a danger. It gave him repeated opportunities for discussing the political situation of France, the strength of that situation, and what it might become when exploited by a genius so rare as his and ever seconded by a victorious arm,<sup>1</sup> and as the

<sup>1</sup> In order to better conceive the art and the species of abandon, with which M. de Talleyrand knew how to flatter Napoleon, it would be necessary to read a letter which has just come under my notice, and which he wrote on the occasion of Napoleon's birthday. It is dated from the watering-place of Bourbonne, and its main subject is a journey which the Emperor and the Empress had just made through the northern provinces of France. In it he blamed the newspapers for having spoken of this journey, the like of which, he argued, was not recorded in history, as they would have spoken of Louis XVI.'s trip to Normandy. He censured them, moreover, for having diverted public opinion from this important occur-

art of conversation is one wherein he excels, as he knows how to lead up to everything he is desirous of saying, I have no doubt that with the object of avoiding the danger which he dreaded in those days, he did not during the first years do too much towards magnifying and extolling the ambitious genius which he later on sought to control, and which laughed so cruelly at his impotent efforts.

At the time when I once more entered public life, Talleyrand had not yet been awakened from his dream. The fortunate Minister of Foreign Affairs had seen the days of the Consulate pass by without his meeting with any difficulties; he had contributed towards the establishment of the Empire, and his name was attached to some of the highest diplomatic negotiations. He witnessed the growth of his reputation for talent and ability; he had grown in favor, and had left far behind him his colleague M. Fouché, whose importance grew lesser as the unhappy times which had given it existence rolled past. He was still at the head of the Ministry of General Police; he had been removed from his post for a few months, but the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal had restored it to him, and he was indebted to that conspiracy for the return of an influence all the more to be regretted in that it ever seemed to owe its birth to public misfortunes.

It is not an easy task to paint the portrait of M. de Talleyrand. How is one to reproduce such changing colors? The more one studies his character, the less one

rence, by speaking of the tour of a few Councillors of State through the departments, of the one, among others, which had been undertaken by M. Regnaud, whose wife had accompanied him. "Oh!" he exclaimed in this connection, "how much are not books and journals in need of a censorship!" The letter closes with the customary protestations of respect and devotion, and he begs leave to supplement them with the expression of an attachment which he ventures to style tender. It is a license which he allows himself on a day which seems to him to justify a little more abandon in his language. (This footnote was written in October, 1829.)

fathoms it. The fact is, that it is actually difficult to find in him anything settled and stable. Although endowed to a remarkable degree with certain qualities of the mind, it is hard to discover any quality of mind or heart that can be ascribed to him. Capable of immoderate desires rather than of violent passions, susceptible of receiving every kind of impression, a prey to all sorts of tastes, even the most despicable, no means was repugnant to him when the question arose of gratifying his desires and contenting his tastes.

The world has perhaps never produced a man lacking more in delicacy of sentiment, and more incapable of being influenced by any idea of morality. No one ever so made sport of the world's opinion. He defied it constantly both in his public and private life, in his morals as in his political conduct. The desire of shaking off the restraints of a condition of life which he had embraced regretfully, and to which he had been condemned through a natal deformity, and the need of an unbridled licentiousness seemed to have thrown him into the arms of the Revolution more than any of the liberal sentiments which he sometimes sought to parade, and which he far oftener trampled under foot. A bishop and a *grand seigneur* in 1789, it cost him little to be one of the earliest deserters from his caste and from his vows of ordination, and no one followed this path with a firmer step and carried his head higher, sacrificing with equal readiness to the Revolution, the goods and chattels of the one, and the honors and privileges of the other. But, if from amidst the ruins with which he surrounded himself there survived in him a sentiment of any kind, it was the sentiment of pride he derived from his birth and from the rank which he had occupied in the Church. Yet this did not prevent everything appertaining to him, even his episcopal character, being placed at the



disposal of the Revolution. Since 1789, the only use he made of this sacred character was to transmit it, in violation of every right, to the new bishops who did not hesitate to violate the rules of the old Church of France, and again to celebrate on the Champ de Mars the Mass of the first federation.

M. de La Fayette has recently told how the Bishop of Autun, when mounting the steps of the altar with the sacred vase in his hands, saw him there in command of the National Guard, sword in hand, near the steps, and passing as near him as possible, the Bishop whispered to him: "Do not make me laugh." Such a trait needs no comment.

This worthy chaplain to all the immoralities of the Revolution became, moreover, with the aid of the *assignats*, one of the principal financiers of the Constituent Assembly, leaving its halls only to go and gamble away these *assignats* on the green baize of a gambling-house which was opened in the pavillon de Hanovre by a M. de Castellane, who was the first to give Paris the scandal of a public gambling place. His fate willed it that during the existence of the Legislative Assembly he should receive secretly a diplomatic mission which took him to England, where he succeeded in putting himself on the footing of director and overseer of M. de Chauvelin, the beardless ambassador whom the French cabinet sent to England in those days.

Thus situated, his residence abroad saved him from the perils and evils of all sorts which he had in so great a measure helped to bring down on his country. He was in Paris on the 10th of August, but he soon crossed the Straits again, to be followed by a decree of accusation hurled against him by the Convention. He was expelled from England at the time of the declaration of war which followed the execution of Louis XVI. He was the only French citizen of any note then taking refuge in England,

against whom Mr. Pitt made use of the powers conferred on him by the Alien Act. Thus, no other resource was left to M. de Talleyrand than to make a journey to America. He came back to France after the Terror, being guaranteed immunity by a decree which his former friends wrested from the Convention. Chénier was the principal mover in the matter. The terms of the petition which he presented to the Convention to obtain this favor, and the speeches which were delivered in his praise by his friend would make curious reading nowadays.

His life then became consecrated to obscure intrigues, until the day when Mme. de Staël lifted him out of distress by introducing him to the Directeur Barras, who shortly afterwards gave him the portfolio of foreign affairs. He ill repaid the service rendered to him by Mme. de Staël when the day came for her to draw imperial anger to herself. Barras's new minister was soon to join hands with his protector in bringing about the 18th Brumaire, when the men who had given him the warmest welcome on his return to France were to be sacrificed.

It was about this time that he took a step the precise date of which escapes me. He sent M. de Fontanes to the king, Louis XVIII., for the purpose of tendering him his services. As sole reward he asked for the Duchy of Périgord, and to be made free of his ecclesiastical bonds. The king granted him the first request without making any difficulty; with regard to the second one, he replied that it was a matter concerning the Pope. Negotiations were soon broken off.

M. de Talleyrand did not allow his public post to stand in the way of his private interests. A week after his becoming minister, he had acquired five or six hundred thousand francs. This talent for making money never abandoned him; he exercised it with a like good fortune on

all occasions, and no treaty is known in the framing of which he took a part which did not furnish him an opportunity. The Treaty of Lunéville, wherein it was stipulated that Austria would redeem the paper-money which she had issued in Belgium, gave him the means of reaping enormous benefits, for he bought up this paper-money ere anybody knew of the stipulation.

Secularization in Germany, and the arrangements which the new territorial partitions occasioned, became a fresh source of profits, and a much greater one than the first. I have heard them valued by well-informed people at four millions at least. It must be said in justice to M. de Talleyrand that he did not keep all to himself the fruits of his venality. He felt it was necessary to allow many of his co-workers a share in them, for it was a good way of securing useful and faithful instruments. His gains must have been immense, for they were sufficient to meet his enormous expenses, and through them he built up the fortune which he still enjoys. It may perhaps be said that in nothing did he show himself wiser and more consistent. What would he be to-day without that fortune? Let us for a moment suppose him poor, and then try and form an idea of his existence. It is more than likely that the remainder of his days, would, like those of many hardly less worthless than himself, be passed in oblivion and neglect.

I have said that he was deficient in delicacy of sentiment. He does not even possess the kind necessary to resent offence for any length of time. The sentiment of an honest pride which springs in the human breast from a sense of offended dignity does not exist in him, and his entire moral personality seems clothed with a hard and polished covering over which insults and contempt glide without penetrating it. Hence it is that there does not exist any affront

which he will not brush from his memory if he perceives the slightest advantage in becoming reconciled with the person who should be to him an object of resentment. This seems so natural to him that his surprise is ever fresh when he sees his advances rejected. In his eyes, he who rejects them merely shows a lack of intelligence. But, if he is deficient in this delicate organization of heart and soul, there remains another to which he can lay claim, and that is the delicacy of good taste. Many *mots* and phrases are quoted from his lips which denote the most subtle and surest tact. It is this which first gave him his reputation in society.

I must therefore give him credit for this merit, while confining it, however, to the occasions when he has been able to prepare his language and his phrases; for, when taken unawares through some irritating circumstance, or, if he is not warned to keep a guard on his anger, it finds vent in the coarsest words.

Numerous are the instances in which he has offended every propriety. At the head of the list of his offences in this line must stand his marriage, and it is at the same time the most inexplicable of them all, for one cannot imagine what the particular seduction was which led him to it. To marry an old mistress, who has been the mistress of twenty others; to marry her when the last vestiges of her good looks have almost vanished, when nothing remains to her but a glaring and well-recognized stupidity, of a nature to cover her with undying ridicule!

It has been thought that this woman was the depositary of his wealth, or the possessor of some secret of the highest importance, and that the price of her secrecy was the return she claimed as her just due. Some even go so far as to believe that Bonaparte carried his Machiavelism to the extent of compelling the man of whom he made use in his

most important operations, but whose intrigues he dreaded, to a deed which by discrediting him completely, would put it out of his power to be noxious. And indeed I know for a fact that Mme. Grand went to Malmaison, in order to throw herself at the feet of the First Consul, and implore him to see to it that justice should be done her. I also know that the First Consul remarked, on her leaving him, that this woman had just shown him to what a high degree the wish to gratify a passionate desire could impart eloquence even to the most stupid of women.

Without either adopting or rejecting any one of these surmises, or even probable explanations, I must remark that for him who knows M. de Talleyrand, it does not in any way seem impossible to attribute the larger share of this strange determination to the ascendant which importunity exercises over weakness, to the desire of finding some little amount of peace in a domestic arrangement, the habit of which he did not know how to shake off; lastly, to a supreme indifference to public opinion and that custom of defying it which makes it a matter of course not to sacrifice anything to it. But, one thing is certain, and that is, if there was a circumstance of his life on which M. de Talleyrand never opened himself to anybody, on the subject of which he never allowed himself to be penetrated by his friends, that is the one. I have heard it said by M. de Choiseul-Gouffier, one of his intimate acquaintances, that he had employed all his acuteness (and he had much) in trying to bring Talleyrand to make some explanation on this subject, and he never succeeded. It remains to be told that the marriage took place furtively at Epinay, in the Valley of Montmorency. M. de Monville, a former councillor of the Paris Parlement, who owned property in the village, had arranged matters with the parish priest. M. de Monville's kindness in the matter (it was, I believe



made easy by M. Louis) brought him a peerage in 1815, when M. de Talleyrand was President of the Council.

If it is asked how such a man came to play so important a part for so many long years, the answer is that he appeared at the right time for himself, in the midst of the most troublous times, and of the most complete social disorganization. At any other time, his wit, in spite of its brilliancy, would have merely brought him the ephemeral successes which the *salons* can give, and it would assuredly not have placed him in a position of governing public affairs in an order of things wherein sound and conscientious talents, and the respect of self and of public opinion would have been the conditions requisite for any man holding an important political position.

Added to this, this wit which I so readily grant him, and the brilliancy of which I do not contest, has not been strengthened by, and is not capable of serious study, and could never bind itself down to a work requiring perseverance and a continued attention. While possessing in a high degree the art of disjointed conversations, he would not be capable of speaking consecutively in any public assembly for a quarter of an hour, resembling in that his colleague and rival, M. Fouché. But, he knows admirably how to pounce upon an idea; whether it comes to him spontaneously, or whether another has supplied him with it, he takes possession of it, looks at every side of it, extracts from it all the brilliancy that it contains, and displays it under numerous and varied aspects; it furnishes him food for a long time, and he exhausts it unto satiety. And the reason of this, I venture to say, is that his own stock of ideas is much less rich than is generally believed. By way of compensation, he possesses the faculty of exploiting with rare cleverness all who serve him, all who are about him. People who are intimately acquainted with

him tell me that he employed the pens of others even for the writing of certain part of his Memoirs. He thus makes up very cleverly for the work which he does not do himself, by substituting for it that which he causes to be done to order, and his exquisite tact points out to him any word which must be expunged, while teaching him to add the right word.

He felt at home with the First Consul, with the Emperor, for all that was required of him was to listen closely, to grasp matters with discernment, and to combat with nicety and caution what might seem unusual and exaggerated in the ideas presented. It was a struggle in which the clever modes of expression, a thing in which he excelled,<sup>1</sup> were of great use to him. When, after having discussed matters with the Emperor, he would receive the foreign ambassadors, he had at his disposal a rich store to draw from. All that remained for him to do was to tone down the too great harshness of certain speeches by giving them a milder form, and the charm of his conversation made it easy for him to dispose of this difficulty. It was well known that he had many occasions to surmount it, and people gave him credit for the brilliant ease with which he acquitted himself of the task.

Napoleon himself always appreciated his merits in this connection, and he was still wont to say, after he had parted company with him, that he was an excellent minister for parleys. Nothing better explains how his reputation became so generally established, and how it gradually increased for such a length of time. We shall see him later on left to his own conceptions, and compelled to keep him-

<sup>1</sup> I have heard a man of intellect (M. de Narbonne) say, that if M. de Talleyrand had on several occasions told some pretty plain truths to the Emperor, this was to be attributed in a far lesser degree to a feeling that they would prove serviceable, than to the pleasure he enjoyed in seeing the Emperor permit such a liberty, owing to the way he put them before him, and the happy way with which he gave expression to them.

self up to the level of the greatest and of the most unexpected position. Then shall we be able to decide, with a full acquaintance of the facts, if the judgment I here pass on him is or is not based on sufficient grounds.

Next to the four personages whom I have made known there remains about the First Consul and the Emperor nothing but a few more or less able, devoted, and docile instruments, whose services proved of great use, but to whom it is not possible to attribute, except under special and temporary circumstances, a lasting part in the direction of public affairs.

M. Maret, afterwards Duc de Bassano, and at that time Secretary of State, always held, from the first days of the Consulate, a position of trust which derived all the appearances of intimacy from the nature of its functions. His services were appreciated, and his assiduous and almost indefatigable ardor for work was of undoubted value. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to admit, that up to a period to be dwelt on later, his mind had not been considered capable of undertaking any heavier burden than the one involved in executing to the letter orders given him, and a rapid and facile putting into shape of such ideas as had been agreed and settled upon.

On a much higher plane, M. Portalis, Senior, Councillor of State, and later on Minister of Public Worship, had exercised at the time of the concluding of the Concordat an important and salutary influence on the manner in which the clergy was reorganized. He also took a prominent part in the framing of the Civil Code, of all monuments of legislation of those times the one approaching nearest to perfection. Here, therefore, we find a man who gave potent aid on great occasions. Bonaparte thought a good deal of his acquirements, and greatly admired his natural, brilliant, and flowing eloquence. The art of speech was ever a weapon in the eyes of this great con-

queror, who often referred to it as such. Yet it cannot be said that with all these endowments and in spite of so many services of a special nature, M. Portalis enjoyed a sustained influence in the direction of public affairs. He was one of those whom Bonaparte looked upon as too far committed to a line of conduct which he was prepared to enter upon and follow by degrees, but into which he did not wish to be driven precipitately. He feared that he might, in this respect, surrender too much of himself to the seductive language of his Councillor of State or Minister.

M. de Laplace and M. Chaptal, both for a time entrusted with the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior, were soon set aside. The mathematical rectitude of the former, in spite of the superiority of his intellect, rendered him utterly incapable for the work required of a public administrator. The latter knew and understood nothing but what pertained to the useful arts combined with natural sciences, and especially chemistry. Moreover, he lacked in his private life, as well as in his behavior as a public man, the sentiment of the proprieties, so necessary to the intercourse which a Minister of the Interior is called upon to preserve with all classes of society.

It is hardly worth while to speak of the trial that was made of M. Lucien Bonaparte in the same position. His independence of mind and character of which he was to give so many proofs in the future, made him altogether unfit for taking from and carrying out the orders of a brother, whom he could not resign himself to see in a position so superior to his own.

The disagreements between the Emperor and his family, the difficulties which arose from these disagreements, and the obstacles which they threw in the way of the establishment and the keeping up of his power, constitute an important portion of his history.

## CHAPTER X

*The Corps législatif*—*The Tribunal*—Creation of the Council of State and the nature of its work—*The comité du contentieux*—Principal members of the Council of State—Messieurs Defermon and Lacuée, presidents of committees—Messieurs Gaudin and Mollien, Ministers—Councillors Regnaud, Treilhard, Berlier, Merlin, and Réal—Measures demanded against the Jews—An assembly of prominent Jews called together in Paris—Messieurs Molé, Portalis, and Pasquier, as Commissioners of the Emperor in that Assembly—The “Portuguese” Jews—Declaration made by the doctors and the rabbis—M. Furtado of Bordeaux—The interest charged on money and usury—The practice of Jews among themselves—Sacerdotal power of the rabbis—The *Talmudists*—Convening by the Emperor of a great Sanhedrin and its meeting, February 9, 1807—Declaration of doctrine of the great Sanhedrin on the civil and political duties of Israelites and the organization of Jewish society in France.

AMONG the members of the Council of State were a number of men, who, although they did not occupy prominent positions, nevertheless rendered valuable services. The great legislative and administrative work of the day was elaborated in that body, and with it rested the general supervision of all the branches of the administration. In this respect, the part played by the Council of State was an important one. In the course of the two successive organizations of the Imperial government, the Council of State was the only body really intrusted with supplementing the altogether illusory action of the representative machinery of government, for it alone was in a position to do so.

In a properly organized government by representation, the three principal objects of the existence of deliberative Chambers, are to impose taxation, to frame laws in a spirit



best suited to the social state of the country, and to exercise supervision over the acts of the government. It is an undoubted fact that the organization of the *Corps législatif*, under the consular as well as under the Imperial régime, was in no respect such as to allow of its fulfilling these several attributes. Was it feasible to grant an enlarged sphere of action to it, at a period so close to the stormy days and evils of all kinds which had been drawn down on France by the preceding assemblies, whose debates had been public? Was there not good cause for dreading the being exposed once more to similar perils? Such a fear must have been a most natural one in those days, for the reason that it was so generally felt. As I have already pointed out, there was not to be found among the men who helped to create the consular government, several of whom could be looked upon as most liberal minded, a single one who hesitated in the slightest degree with regard to what was the right course to follow in this connection.

With regard to the creation of the *Tribunat*, which seemed destined to afford a compensation for the silence imposed on the *Corps législatif*, the idea was altogether an unhappy one, and in lieu of the good results anticipated from it being realized, it often gave birth to serious difficulties. This melancholy truth soon became apparent, and it needed, for its manifestation, but a very short trial of a body which did nothing but go on debating, while no final result was obtained from all this talk. This body, on whom no responsibility weighed, was certainly not one to be greatly feared. Good and wise counsels might occasionally emanate from it; but it was to be expected that they would be swept away in a flood of useless, if not dangerous, speechifying. It became necessary to go a step further. When everything has to be created, when the time comes to renew in their entirety the legislation and administration of a great state,

it cannot be expected that such an object is to be attained by means of a large, deliberative assembly, with its public, and oftentimes riotous, debates. Such debates must of necessity bring passions into play, and it would be difficult to get a sustained piece of work out of its naturally incoherent results.

Neither constitutions nor legislations have been the work of the multitude. In modern as in olden times, when they have not been the result of the manners and usages consecrated by centuries, they have issued from the brains of a little group of men who have known how to impose their acceptance on their fellow-creatures. Hence it would have been, in my opinion, impossible to obtain from the *Corps législatif*, such as constituted by the Charter of Louis XVIII., the compiling of the Civil Code which Bonaparte bequeathed to France. The truth of this is patent if one will only consider the difficulties which would arise in getting the *Chambre des pairs* and the *Chambre des députés* to come to an agreement on so many different subjects, and to unite in spirit in a debate which would necessarily extend over several years.

If I am right in what I say, it is easy to understand how Bonaparte reaped from the discussions of his Council of State far more important results than those he could have derived from even the freest debates of his *Corps législatif*.

Freed from all restraint, he obtained from his Council, in the first place, quick work, a thing of the highest importance, and in the second, a cohesion in the ideas and in the application of principles which he would have vainly sought elsewhere. It enabled him to entrust the principal direction of the work relating to special subjects to men whom he rightly looked upon as experts, and as eminently qualified for the task. Such is the means he took, especially as regards the Civil Code, and the results go to prove that this

method was the best. When it came to the framing of the other codes, several of these distinguished men had passed away, and so it became necessary to divide the work among a greater number of committees, and in spite of a general discussion of the subjects in the Council, the results proved less satisfactory.

Full freedom of speech reigned in the Council, which went straight to the goal, and did not waste its time in idle talk. Its discussions were undoubtedly governed by far different rules from those which formerly prevailed in the Paris Parlement, and yet, nothing has ever better recalled to my mind, the solemnity, the wisdom, and the sound learning of that famed body, and so I had great cause for congratulating myself, when thrown among such entirely new surroundings, upon being able to call to my assistance some of the recollections of the body in which I had received my first parliamentary training.

Previous to any law being officially presented, a conference was generally held between a number of Councillors of State designated by the Emperor, and a like number of commissioners taken from the *Corps législatif*. The purport of the law was set forth and discussed at these conferences, wherein the number of the participants was never in excess of the one considered sufficient for men of business to explain themselves and to come to an agreement. Hence it was that on many an occasion the preliminary draft of a law underwent the most valuable modifications.

The services rendered by the Council of State in the administration of civil affairs were of a most important nature. The imposition of new taxes, their mode of assessment, and especially the organizing of the entire system of indirect taxation were the results of the most learned and practical discussions. But it must not be thought that the tax-payers' interests were unrepresented on such occasions;

far from it, their part was always taken with zeal and talent, and if the supreme chief was at times too greatly inclined to listen to the inspirations of his all-powerful will, he never could, when committing blunders, plead that he had not been sufficiently enlightened and cautioned. It is only rendering him justice to acknowledge that he allowed perfect freedom of debate, that expression could be given to every view, and that he listened to all that was said with attention and patience, without seeming to take offence at what must have displeased him, even in regard to matters in connection with which he could least afford to surrender his absolute power. As an example, I mention the military conscriptions, against the excessive number of which I have often heard objections raised with noble independence, and especially by M. Regnaud.

Again, there are those numberless regulations governing public administration, which placed on a new basis almost everything that had been destroyed by the Revolution.

It but remains for me to show the wholesome check exercised by the Council of State over the acts of the Government, and how, in so doing, it undertook a duty belonging by rights to the *Corps législatif*. I do not, however, pretend to say that it fell to its lot to supplant entirely the salutary watchfulness of public opinion, enlightened by the publicity of that body's acts and debates; but, in the absence of such a supervision, the following is what occurred. With the exception of those cares appertaining in a direct fashion to the sphere of politics, and especially politics affecting an invasion, such as the decrees establishing the continental blockade, those relating to the final repudiation of the national debt at the time of the general liquidation, and several others of a like nature; outside of such cases, I repeat, the ministers of the First Consul or of the Emperor never presented to him for

signature any decree of importance, without its having first been submitted to the committee of the Council, whose attributes it was to take cognizance of the subject-matter of the decree. This happened in all matters affecting the Ministers of Justice, Finance, of the Interior, of War, and of the Navy.

Hence these committees exercised a rather troublesome and sometimes very severe supervision over the ministers, who submitted to it with ill-disguised annoyance. They found in them opponents almost always as well informed as themselves, who would sometimes entertain the idea that they were at no distant time to be called upon to fill their positions, and whom it always pleased greatly to make a display of their ability, by showing care not to overlook any errors or mistakes that came under their notice.

Did the Emperor receive any vigorous protests against the doings of his ministers, against the administration of his directors-general, or against his prefects, he would transmit them to the Council of State, where they gave rise to an investigation, oftentimes of the most severe kind. This appeal to the Council became far more serious matter for the ministers as well as for the administrators, when placed within the reach of private individuals through the *comité du contentieux* (law committee to investigate disputes), and this, independently of the matters referred to the Council from the Emperor's closet. The creation of this committee was an event in the history of the Imperial government. Constituted as it was, under the presidency of the chief justice, of those *maîtres de requêtes*, who were of his making, the latter, having to show what they were capable of, entered zealously upon the fulfilment of the duties entrusted to them. Generally speaking, they were governed by conscientious and strict equity, and, in addition to righting many wrongs committed by the administration,



they rendered not a few decisions from which private individuals derived great benefit, and the result of which was to cause public officials to pay greater attention to avoiding illegal acts.

But what signalized especially the institution of the *maîtres des requêtes*, was the putting an end to the abuse which officialdom had acquired of encroaching upon the jurisdiction of the tribunals, by extending beyond all limits that of the prefectural councils. Messieurs the prefects were all the more inclined to endorse the action of these councils that they showed themselves docile to their chief's will.

The *comité du contentieux* put an end to this irregularity, and in a short time succeeded in clearly drawing a dividing line between the administrative and judicial powers. The ministers themselves were not exempt from the warnings of the committee, which received the endorsement of the Council of State, and many private individuals derived most valuable support from it when seeking to obtain the fulfilling of contracts they had entered into with the several ministers. I do not pretend that everything was done which should have been done in this connection. The evil was too deeply rooted to permit of its being disposed of by the sole influence of the *comité du contentieux*, however zealous it might be in the fulfilment of its duties. Nor do I pretend that side by side with the services it rendered, the Council of State does not deserve blame for acts of weakness and of favoritism, for I unfortunately witnessed many an example of this; but I believe I may truly say that, in spite of these blemishes, few congregations of men are to be found, which have given in their discussions, and in the conclusions they reached, better proofs of an independence which was always enlightened, and oftentimes stamped with great liberality.

The Council was naturally so constituted that only the firm hand of such a chief could create and maintain it, if not in a perfect state of homogeneity, at least compel it to accomplish a series of undertakings leading to a common goal. During the first six years of its life, the Council gathered into its bosom nearly everything that the Revolution had produced in the shape of men distinguished by merits or talents which had most frequently shone in opposite camps. It was necessary that these conflicting elements should amalgamate in the Council.

By way of example, the Constituent Assembly had given to it M. Mounier, who was the first to plainly show himself opposed to the Assembly's deeds of violence, and who had fled from the scenes of the 14th of July and of the 6th of October. Sitting with him were Messieurs Rœderer and Regnaud, who both had been reckoned among the most ardent spirits of the revolutionary party. The Legislative Assembly had supplied M. Français de Nantes, one of its most fiery speakers; M. Dumas, one of royalty's most zealous defenders during the days preceding the 10th of August; M. Bigot de Préameneu, who during the same period made his reputation through the wisdom of his principles, and M. Muraire, who expiated through a long imprisonment during the Terror, the talent and the moderation he displayed in 1792. His seat adjoined that of M. Merlin, the author of the law against the *suspects*; the Council received from the Convention M. Defermon, one of those proscribed on the 31st of May, and again, M. Berlier and M. Treillard, who both had voted the death of Louis XVI., and who both, dating from the 31st of May, had perseveringly voted with the extreme section of the Mountain.

The simon-pure Jacobins had contributed M. Réal; the king's defence, M. Tronchet; the Conseil des Anciens and the Conseil des Cinq-Cents, M. Portalis and M. Siméon, both

victims of the 18th Fructidor; M. Lacuée, who, although deeply implicated, had escaped the disasters of that day, and M. Boulay (de la Meurthe), one of the day's principal artisans, that M. Boulay whose arrogance so contrasted with the bearing of M. de Ségur, who by the elegance of his manners and the urbanity of his language, seemed to be the representative of the graces of the old régime. I content myself with mentioning merely the names the coupling of which together affords the greatest contrast. I must add to this list of prominent civilians several most distinguished soldiers, such as Generals Gouvion Saint-Cyr, Dejean, Des-solle, Andréossi, and also Admiral Gantheaume. Lastly, there were the several men called from foreign lands as the territory of the Empire became extended, who introduced ideas and customs entirely at variance with those of the French people. They were for the most part chosen from among the most prominent men of the annexed territories. To name a few of many: M. de Saint-Marsan, who represented Piedmont; M. Corsini, Tuscany; M. Bartolocchi, Rome; M. Alopeus, Holland, and others. At the time of my entering the Council, death had removed from its midst Messieurs Tronchet and Mounier.

The men called upon to fill the highest positions in the various branches of the civil service and of the government were most often taken from the Council. Nearly all the ministers had sat in it; but, as a natural consequence, it was recruited from those who showed talent in any branch whatsoever of the public service. For instance, Messieurs Beugnot, Montalivet, and others had entered it by way of their prefectural positions. Some there were who had made themselves prominent and acquired greater importance than others, the most prominent among these being Messieurs Regnaud, Defermon, Bigot de Préameneu, and Lacuée, president of the committees, and Messieurs Béranger, Treil-hard, Cretet, Boulay, and Beugnot.

M. Regnaud enjoyed an uncontested superiority over his colleagues, by virtue of his many varied acquirements, his ready aptitude for work, and his fluency of speech. Unfortunately, his loose life, his extravagant tastes, and the need of money which harassed him continually, in spite of the repeated generosity of the Emperor, blocked the way to his appointment as Minister of the Interior, a post which otherwise would surely have fallen to his lot. No one affected a greater freedom of expressing his opinions than he did, and his cleverness of speech furnished him the means of maintaining them without too greatly compromising himself; on certain occasions he would defend them, with noble constancy, under most delicate circumstances. He was the most sincere man in the Council in his liberal mindedness, here taken in the truest sense of the word. He knew not the feeling of envy, and ever showed himself ready to recognize and to encourage merit wherever he found it. The weak side of his mind was a childish dread of priests and of religious power. This dread, which had so little cause to be at the time when he was a prey to it, plainly derived its origin from the prejudice which reigned previous to the Revolution, and which had been one of its principal causes.

M. Béranger, who was no less independent, likewise enjoyed a great fluency of speech, but he was drier, less agreeable to listen to, and ever ready to defend ideas which were plainly paradoxical. His opposition to everything that ran counter to his opinions and principles was all the more appreciated because he was a member of the Finance committee, and it was in that committee that the blindest devotion to the master's will was met with.

As the president of that committee, M. Defermon had considerable influence. Possessing merely the knowledge of the every-day practician (previous to the Revolution he

had been a *procureur* within the jurisdiction of the Rennes Parlement), his language was of the most ordinary kind. Still he had been greatly esteemed in the Convention, owing to the fearlessness which he had displayed. He was a Treasury Commissioner when Bonaparte called him to the Council, with the object, unfortunately, of placing him in charge of the liquidation of the national debt. In that connection, his narrow mind dictated to him financial measures greatly to be deplored. In his private affairs a man of admirable delicacy, whose honesty was beyond doubt, ever excellent in his social intercourse, good, humane, and charitable in spite of his limited means, he quickly became unfair in his dealings with the creditors of the state. He would never see in them anything but dishonesty, and as he was ever prone to imagine that they reaped illegal profits, nobody influenced Bonaparte more in his violation of the engagements he had entered into. If M. Defermon stood so well in the master's eyes, it was because Bonaparte found in him so docile an instrument in carrying out his mandates.

The presidency of the Finance Committee afforded many opportunities for attaining a success of this kind, and yet, the matters referred to it always came from the two best governed ministries, those of Finance and of the Treasury. Messieurs Gaudin and Mollien were, in every respect and by every possible qualification, far superior to the man who thought he was entitled to show them how to do their work. How comes it that the Emperor did not at once discover the immeasurable distance which separated them? It was long ere he realized it. However, the time came when this illusion was bound to vanish, and I chanced to learn how it came about. If I here anticipate dates, it is in order to better complete my pen-portrait. The liquidation of the arrears having been accomplished, in other words, bank-



ruptcy having been declared, the Emperor thought himself bound to reward the man who had so fully understood and carried out his intentions, and so he made him comptroller of the *domaine extraordinaire*, a position which carried with it the prerogative of dealing directly with the Emperor. This gave the latter the opportunity of seeing M. Defermon actually engaged in an administrative work which required a man to take everything unto himself, and where there was no longer any question of merely being the controller of others. From that moment, his incapacity was quickly to make itself patent. As Prefect of Police, I was in Napoleon's closet, one day, when he was giving vent to his extreme dissatisfaction with M. Defermon's methods. "And yet, this is the man who, had I not subjected him to the present test, I would have chosen to fill the place of M. Gaudin! How easy it is to be deceived by demonstrations of clumsy zeal!" he said to me.

In spite of this wise reflection, the Emperor was, at the time he uttered it, under the charm of a man who was hardly worthier of his confidence than M. Defermon. This was M. Lacuée, the president of the War Committee, who was soon to become, in addition to this, director of the conscription. He had given proof of a zeal without limits, and was to all appearance indifferent to the sacrifices demanded of the country. I can never forget what he told me on the day when, for the first time, he wore the *grand cordon* of the Legion of Honor. This mark of favor intoxicated him. Never did the Emperor appear so great to him, and he wound up his praise of him to me in the following terms: "What can France not aspire to become under such a man? To what a high degree of glory and happiness cannot he raise her, provided, of course, we get yearly two hundred thousand men out of the conscription, and, indeed, considering the vastness of the Empire, this should be an easy task!"

Among all those who had a voice in the Council, no man existed whose methods were more opposed to adulation than M. Treilhard, who, still under the influences of the Palais, brought into all his speeches the severity of an inflexible pleader. One cannot deny him great acquirements in matters of jurisprudence; he had proved this in the days of the Constituent Assembly; but the *conventionnel* and the former *directeur* occasionally made themselves manifest in his opinions, as well as in those of M. Berlier, a man of far greater intellect than himself, and especially endowed with a rare talent for speaking. But it was impossible not to detect in him a chronic feeling of uneasiness, and it was plain that the recollection of certain events in his life, and especially of the part he had taken in the death of Louis XVI., made him feel constrained on many an occasion. I always appreciated this feeling; it was a proof of regret forced from him by his conscience. In this respect, he differed greatly from his colleague, M. Treilhard, who never seemed to have any recollection of the part he had played in the tragedy. Nor was M. Merlin's memory troubled with it. The latter deserves some further mention.

M. Merlin owed his appointment as *procureur* at the *Cour de cassation*, as well as that of Councillor of State, to his great knowledge in matters of jurisprudence. Having, when a member of the *Cour de cassation*, no other duty but to call for the application of laws already clearly defined, and acquainted with them all down to their smallest details, he was, it must be acknowledged, fully qualified for his duties; but, in the Council, his usefulness was limited, as everything he said could have been better and more readily found in the book on which his reputation rested, his *Répertoire de jurisprudence*. I never saw him contribute any theory or any conclusive argument to any discussion. His enunciation was labored and harsh. Not only had

science not enlightened his mind, but it seemed to have dried up his heart. I never knew a man who could less distinguish between what was just or what was not. Everything seemed to him well and good, so long as it was the consequence of the letter of the law. It was ever with a smile on his lips, with his face beaming with satisfaction, that he would seek in his vast store of legal erudition the text of the law which prescribed some rigorous measure or sentence of some sort. It will be readily understood that such conduct caused him to be generally shunned. He was never on a footing of intimacy with anybody in the Council, not even with M. Réal, who generally occupied the seat adjoining his.

The latter's character bore a stamp which was pre-eminently its own. Never blushing over his former Jacobinism, proud even of recalling it, he had taken up the Emperor in default of any revolutionary government, and he quietly drifted along, serving him and defending him with the same means which he had formerly placed at the disposal of the one and indivisible Republic. Endowed with much natural wit, and not so bad-hearted as one might suppose from a kind of joviality which never abandoned him, even when engaged in carrying out the harshest measures, he occasionally gave proof of generous sentiments expressed with rather expansive feeling. He was better than the life he had led, and the former defender of Babeuf had likewise defended a few *émigrés* whom he had succeeded in saving.

A few months after my joining the Council of State, M. Berthier de Sauvigny, one of my kinsmen, having been arrested on a charge of conspiracy, and being implicated in most serious fashion, the taking of preliminary proceedings in the case fell to M. Réal. I spoke to him frankly about the case, and while in no way seeking to palliate M.

Berthier's actions, I begged him to save the unfortunate man who was more thoughtless than guilty. He promised me he would do so, adding that it afforded him pleasure to do something for a new colleague, and he kept his word. He was what we might call a thoroughly good fellow, and, as such, one could not help feeling occasionally grateful to him for the warmth with which he defended the still living remnants of his former friends. He bewailed the unfortunate condition of most of them, and the state of neglect in which the government left them.

One will find in the four last pen-portraits which I have drawn, an almost perfect picture of what the most stormy times of the Revolution had bequeathed to the Council. Outside of these men there was a long list of others who had reached the goal after a life oftentimes hard, bringing with them the tribute of their acquirements and talents, and having nothing of their past to regret. Such were M. Bigot de Préameneu, so pure, so learned, who did not have a principle, who breathed not a sentiment which was not worthy of praise; M. Daru, whose intellect was so many-sided, and who enjoyed a facility for work never surpassed; M. Muraire, M. Pelet de la Lozère, M. Faure, M. de Sussy, M. d'Hauterive, and so many others, whose work was always useful, when it was not brilliant.

The president, M. de Cambacérès, possessed in the highest degree the talents required in so elevated a position, always directing the debate without imposing restraint on it, interfering only when it became absolutely necessary, and ever in a manner most calculated to throw a light upon the subject; sober of speech, for he never uttered a word with the object of making his importance felt, he would sum up and set forth matters with a lucidity compelling the least enlightened mind to grasp and understand them. The influence of such a president on the progress of an assembly

is greater than can be expressed. We had an opportunity of discovering this during a short absence which he was allowed to enjoy. His place was taken by M. Lebrun. With him, things soon got into a state of confusion, and the Council was only able to accomplish one-half of what it would have done with M. de Cambacérès. No sooner did the latter return, than all difficulties seemed to vanish as if owing to his mere presence.

The first occasion on which the Emperor showed the trust he was inclined to repose in the *maîtres des requêtes*, was that of a debate relating to the conditions of life of the Jews, and to their methods in the provinces, where they were to be met with in greater numbers. They were charged, not without cause, with having for some years past, and especially in Alsace, practised usury to such a degree that had they been allowed to collect all that was owing to them, they would have become the proprietors of the better part of the lands of that province. Their reprehensible and traditional industry had been principally exercised to the detriment of the farmers, and it had been singularly fostered by the hard times through which the little landowners had passed, and especially by the heavy burdens which had weighed down on the departments bordering on the Rhine as a result of succeeding wars.

An Imperial decree, bearing the date of May 30th, 1806, had already suspended for a year the proceedings taken by these merciless creditors; but this provisional measure had been adopted merely to give time and means of pronouncing as to the validity of the various claims, with a perfect knowledge of all the facts. It was an arbitrary measure, as, without granting a hearing to the interested parties, each and every claim, of whatever nature, had been included in a common reprobation, without separating the just from the unjust ones, for the sole reason that they were made by



a certain class of French citizens, for how could one deny the Jews citizenship?

It belonged to them by virtue of all the laws passed since the Revolution. They bore all the burdens of citizenship, and notably that of military service. They indeed sought to avoid the conscription, taking advantage of the fact that for a lengthy period, no regular registration had been made of their births, and the greater number had neglected making to the municipalities the declarations prescribed in this respect. And lastly, the absence of patronymic names, which are not in their customs, favored them marvellously, when the time came to make up a military contingent. But these difficulties had been overcome, at the time when the Emperor determined upon suspending the enforcement of their claims.

This measure became the subject of a hot debate in the Council of State. The Committee of the Interior, which was entrusted with the framing of the decree, was unfavorable to it; its president, M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, had in a special fashion opposed it as contrary to the principles of civil rights, and as infringing upon the freedom of worship. And, indeed, was it not a manifest violation of this freedom, to deprive a citizen, because he was of the Jewish persuasion, of any one of the advantages guaranteed by a law common to all? In the eyes of M. Regnaud, to protect the Jews was not merely an act of justice, but it was a safeguard against the Catholic priests, the particular objects of his mistrust.

It so happened that, acting from an entirely different standpoint, a young *auditeur* of the same committee, entrusted with the preliminary work in the matter, did not hesitate to express himself with much warmth in favor of the measures demanded against the Jews. The Emperor became informed of this, and the good-will he bore towards

this *auditeur*—it was M. Molé—increased considerably. The day on which the matter was discussed in the Council, he granted him the unusual favor of allowing him to speak<sup>1</sup> and ordered that his report be printed. A decree suspending the pressing of the Jews' claims was thereupon drawn up in conformity with the ideas embodied in the report; but it was decreed in addition that an assembly of Jews, residing on French territory, should be convened in Paris, on the 15th of July following.

The members of this assembly, whose number was specified in an appendix to the decree, were to be designated by the prefects, and selected from among rabbis, men of property, and other Jews most prominent through their acquirements and reputation for honesty. The duties of the members of this commission consisted in eliciting views concerning the best means of bringing back the Jews to the exercise of the various arts and useful professions, in order that honest industry should take the place of the reprehensible methods with which they had from father to son, for many centuries, earned their living.

When shortly afterwards the question arose as to the appointment of the commissioners, the Emperor bethought himself at once of M. Molé, who had, as a matter of course, acquired this mark of confidence by the part he had already taken in connection with the matter at issue. Moreover, in addition to what I have already told anent the report which he had read before the Council, the Emperor had commissioned him with the preparing of a work entitled *Inquiries into the Political and Religious Status of the Jews, from the Days of Moses unto the Present Times*. This essay was promptly written, and was inserted in the *Moniteur*,

<sup>1</sup> The auditors presented reports to the committees, and were allowed to take a part in their discussions; in the Council, they merely listened to the debates, without enjoying the right of speech.

eighteen columns of which it filled. It was really an indictment of the Jewish nation. In it was set forth the fact that usury did not owe its birth to the misfortunes of the Jewish people, as so often maintained; that it was not only tolerated, but enjoined by the Mosaic law, and by the principal doctors who had interpreted this law; that it had been so prescribed by the Jewish legislator in order to render more complete the separation between his people and other nations; that, in consequence of this, the vice of usury was to be considered as inherent to the character of every true Jew, and so implanted in him that no earthly power could ever eradicate it from him.

The two other commissioners were chosen from among the *maitres des requêtes*: M. Portalis, the son of the Minister of Public Worship, was the second commissioner, and I, the third. When the time came for us to take cognizance of our instructions (I am speaking of M. Portalis and myself), we could not help believing that the whole drift of the Emperor's idea had not been fully grasped, and that M. Molé and the Council of State had failed to penetrate his thoughts. It was plain that the Emperor's object was to make a great political stroke out of what was being merely looked upon as a measure of repression. In fact, the question at issue, according to the documents submitted to us, was to ascertain from the Jews themselves, if their religion really permitted them to take up citizenship in such countries as were ready to grant it to them; whether that religion did not embody prescriptions which rendered impossible, or at the least very difficult, an entire submission to the laws; lastly, whether there was any way by which it was possible to turn to the advantage of society as a whole the talents of a population which so far had shown itself its avowed enemy.

Matters being considered from this standpoint, it became

necessary to subject the Jews to a questioning in due form: first, with regard to what they believed they were permitted to do; and next, as to what they considered forbidden to them. Was it to be accepted as an absolute fact that the Jews were allowed by the Mosaic law to practise usury against all those who did not belong to their persuasion? Was it allowable for them to renounce this faculty in countries wherein usury was prohibited by the laws? Could their doctors and their rabbis give any guarantee towards their obeying such laws? Could military service be reconciled with several of the observances of their religion, such as that of the Sabbath, for instance, that of certain fasts, and the abstinence from certain kinds of food? Might one entertain the idea that they would consent sincerely to join the ranks of the French army every time that the law should call upon them to do so?

These two difficulties were the principal ones which had to be solved, and they will give an idea of the benefit which the Emperor sought to derive from an assembly, for which there was no precedent in the annals of the world, since the days of the dispersion of their tribes, after the taking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by Titus. This assembly, which has passed away almost unnoticed, was in reality a grand conception, and if the results were not in proportion with the idea entertained of it, if it has not left any deep marks of its existence, the fact must be attributed principally to the rapid succession of events which absorbed public attention. And yet, a most interesting spectacle was afforded by the debates which took place in an assembly of men eagerly devoted to a religion, the true spirit of which is so little known, and animated with sentiments so at variance with those governing Christian nations. They were being asked to examine seriously up to what point they could, while overcoming their most deeply implanted

habits, take their place in the modern world, and participate, without wounding their conscience, in the advantages of European civilization.

I threw myself with a good deal of zeal into the fulfilment of the so unexpected task which devolved upon me. As I write these lines, the recollection of this first step towards acquiring a knowledge of the higher affairs of humanity is still full of interest for me. The conqueror's policy had certainly inspired Bonaparte in the matter of this undertaking. While seeking, with the aid of all that was most enlightened in the Jewish race, the means of lifting it out of the abject condition wherein it had languished for so many centuries, he had probably said to himself that so great an act of kindness would forever attach that race to his fortunes, and that he would find auxiliaries disposed to second his plans, wherever the race was to be found in numbers. He was about to undertake another invasion of Germany, which invasion was to lead him through Poland and the neighboring countries, where all business transactions were almost exclusively conducted through the Jews. It was therefore natural that he should believe that no other auxiliaries could prove as useful, and that it was consequently necessary to win them over to his side.

Such was doubtless his frame of mind, at the time of the promulgation of the Imperial decrees, which, in the course of 1808, had a bearing on the religious organization, and the exercise of civil rights of the Jews throughout the whole extent of the Empire.

Soon afterwards, however, it entered the mind of the victorious general, that, while at the head of the French nation and of the French army, he needed no other auxiliaries than his sword, which was alone sufficient to dispose of the fate of Europe, from the banks of the Neva to the Columns of Hercules. The Jewish question had no longer any interest for him.



M. Molé being the first in the order of appointment was unanimously elected president of the commission. The speech which he delivered on the 29th of July, the day of the first meeting of the assembly, revealed a marked hostility towards the Jews, and was not of the kind to inspire them with any confidence in the intentions of the government. The selection of the members of the assembly, to the number of one hundred and twelve, had been, as I have already stated, left with the prefects of the departments wherein the Jews were sufficiently numerous for their presence to have any real importance. This state of things existed principally in the departments of the East and of the South, especially in the one which had Avignon as its chief town, then the department of the Seine, and lastly that of the Gironde.

As was to be anticipated, the prefects had made choice of such Israelites as enjoyed the highest reputation, and also of those who were looked upon as likely to prove most complaisant. It was especially among those hailing from Bordeaux that it was expected to find the most enlightenment and the means of influence which would prove of greatest service. These Jews, generally styled "Portuguese Jews," were reputed to be the descendants of a large Jewish colony which had centuries ago settled by the mouth of the Tagus.

One of the most prominent of these Jews was M. Furtado, a highly respected merchant in the Gironde. He was chosen as president of the assembly. It quickly became patent that the Portuguese Jews were an object of suspicion to all their co-religionists, who looked upon them as apostates. President Furtado was more than any other viewed with distrust. The Jews feigned to believe that he held to his religion merely by the feeling which forbids a man abandoning the religion in which he was born, unless led to

do so by the strongest convictions. As a matter of fact, such was not the state of M. Furtado's mind; his opinions were based on philosophical indifference. The rabbis of Alsace, and those of the former *comtat* of Avignon, who ranked the highest in the matter of science, were wont to say of their presiding officer that it was an easy matter to see that all he knew of the Bible was through Voltaire. His influence was null over an assembly of men animated with the deepest religious convictions. It had been generally supposed that they were governed solely by their pecuniary interests, that they adhered to their religion merely as a matter of custom, and especially because it made their consciences feel easy on the score of living at the expense of all countries which harbored them or tolerated their presence, but one found oneself face to face with men vastly superior to the common herd with which, generally speaking, public opinion classed them. Thoroughly conversant with their religion and its principles, they were strengthened in their attachment to it by the animadversion it drew upon them, and their well-cultivated minds were replete with every kind of knowledge. It was therefore no longer possible to ignore the existence of a Jewish nation, the dregs of which had so far alone come under notice, and which, owing to the care bestowed in selecting the members of the assembly, spoke a language worthy of being listened to.

The questions submitted by the Emperor were gone into with grave deliberation. This hesitancy of course displeased him, and brought forth lively remonstrances on the part of M. Molé. His action was thus running directly counter to the object in view. A circumstance affecting him personally added greatly to the disgust which the way he had of expressing himself inspired in the minds of those whom he was to conciliate. It was generally admitted to be the fact that his great-grandmother, a daughter of Samuel

Bernard, the celebrated Jewish financier who flourished towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV., was of Jewish origin, and there was no doubt as to the large fortune of his family having come to it almost in its entirety through this kinship. It is true that he claimed that the Judaism of Samuel Bernard was a pure fiction, based merely on a chance baptismal name certainly more in use among Jews than among Christians.

We had got no further after a few weeks' labor than on the first day. In addition to the difficulties inherent to the subject-matter, and while admitting on almost all points the fairness of the propositions submitted to them, the most enlightened and most influential members of the assembly informed the commissioners that the declarations asked of them not only embarrassed them, and were delicate matters for their consciences, but that, according to all appearances, they would prove utterly valueless; that they were in no wise qualified to exact obedience from their co-religionists; that, from the very fact that they had been selected by the government, it was not possible to consider them the representatives of the Jewish nation, and as having the right to make any stipulations in its name.

The name of the ancient assembly of doctors, known as the *Great Sanhedrin*, was several times mentioned in their utterances. This body, they contended, would alone have been entitled to speak with authority in such matters, at a time when the Jewish nation existed as a corporate body, and it was still the only one qualified to take cognizance of them.

No sooner had the commissioners laid these arguments before the Emperor, than he at once seized upon the idea, and it was soon given out that he would much like to see the calling together in Paris of a Great Sanhedrin, to be constituted as much as possible according to the rules and

forms laid down by the Mosaic law. His intention was that all the synagogues of his vast Empire and even for Europe should be invited to send to this Sanhedrin doctors or delegates who were to unite with the assembly already in existence, and whose labors should continue jointly with those of the *doctoral* assembly. Thus, he argued, one could flatter oneself with possessing the most legal representation both of the Jewish religion and nation. This would be tantamount to a resurrection of this nation, which could not fail to see the importance of being worthy of so signal a boon.

Special meetings were held to draw up the questions to be submitted to the Great Sanhedrin; many were held, and their sittings were long. A quantity of religious, historical, and political questions were discussed, several of the rabbis displaying a large amount of knowledge, and at times, in connection with matters pertaining to their faith, an eloquence full of warmth and inspiration. The respective attitudes of the commissioners remained as heretofore: M. Molé, ever threatening; M. Portalis and I trying to reclaim, by means of more conciliatory forms, those which our colleague did not cease to render refractory. M. Portalis was already making his mark in these discussions by his wise erudition based on the best authorities, and characterized with a good faith of which he has since given so many proofs. He produced an impression all the greater on those whom it was necessary to persuade, that his position, as son of the Minister of Public Worship, seemed to add greater weight to his words. As for myself, the commissioners were, generally speaking, greatly moved by the sight of my earnest attempts to bring about truly practical results out of our decisions.

On one occasion the expression of their gratitude was so effusive that it would be difficult for me to forget it. It

followed upon one of those sittings wherein M. Molé had shown himself more bitter than usual, and when I had endeavored to destroy the evil effects of some of his words. Several of them came to me next day, and not knowing how to express their gratitude, ended in telling me that ere six months had passed, all Jews, even to those in far-off China, should know how much all Jews owed me for the good I was trying to do them, and for my kindly treatment of them.

These words have always struck me as remarkable, in that they go to prove to what a degree these men, scattered over the whole surface of the globe, separated by such great distances, living under such various skies, and amid manners and customs so dissimilar, keep up their intercourse, identify themselves with their respective interests, and are animated with one and the same spirit. And truly, if one compares the results of all ancient and modern legislation with that of Moses, one is amazed on seeing how great has been the strength of the religious and political bonds, with which he knew how to knit his people together, since a dispersion, lasting two thousand years, has been unable to sever them. The uniformity of Jewish belief manifested itself in the most striking fashion in the debates concerning usury. On this point there was not the slightest difference of opinion among the doctors and rabbis. Contrary to the opinion expressed in M. Molé's report, they all agreed in looking upon the implication that usury practised against strangers was authorized by the Mosaic law as an undeserved insult. "Usury," they said, "was born in our midst, owing to our unfortunate position in the world, and to the necessity to which we have been reduced since our dispersion, of almost continually having to struggle to save the fragments of a fortune of which one was ever seeking to despoil us. Being thus at war with each and every



society among which our lot was cast, it is natural that we should have sought to preserve everything that we could conceal from our persecutors; that we should have taken advantage of all the advantages afforded us by the needs of those in whose midst we were living; but our political and religious law is altogether foreign to the issue. Far from it: it contains on that point a provision dictated by the sentiment of fraternity which it has always sought to engender among us. In order to be able to establish the contrary, a wrong use has been made of a word which has been misunderstood, and to which an interpretation has been given which is all the more false, that it presupposes the existence of a fact and of an idea unknown at the time when this law was given to us.

“In those days, what has since been styled *legal interest* of money was yet unknown; hence, the word *usury* was not to be found in our language, as it would have been without any meaning. Any kind of interest derived from money lent was legal in an equal degree, whatever its rate; this interest was merely a matter to be settled between borrower and lender. Hence it is that in the Hebraic language there is only one word signifying *interest*, but none signifying *usury*.

“Now, what did the Mosaic law enjoin? It forbade the Jews to charge any interest on money which they lent among themselves, and allowed them to demand interest only in the case of loans made by them to strangers. It could not proceed to draw any distinction between interest that was usurious and that which was not, for this distinction was unknown in those days. Hence it is not true that it ever sanctioned the practice of usury in the case of strangers, while forbidding it between Jew and Jew. What has been said about usury is true only in the case of interest, and the word signifying *interest* has been most unreasonably

translated as meaning *usury*. The law which binds or which should bind Jews together remains the same at the present day. A conscientious Jew should charge no interest on the money which he has lent to another Jew, and this is in accordance with what is still taught by the strict interpreters of the law.

“The commercial operations in which Jews have been compelled to engage from one end of the world to the other, have rendered difficult the strict application of this precept, and doubtless the toleration which the doctors could not help showing in this connection, may have led the greater number of Israelites to imagine that as the law prescribed a different mode of acting towards the brother and the stranger, this difference was the one existing between interest and usury. A belief so accommodating to their cupidity was doubtless accepted with readiness, and took root no less easily; but, as it is contrary to the spirit and to the letter of the law, it will always be the duty of the doctors to fight it whenever appealed to on the subject.”

It was impossible for us not to admit, in the face of all the information supplied us, that the Jews, however keen in their special industry, were ever most charitable among themselves; that there was hardly any locality wherein one could find any who were reduced to beg help of anybody but their co-religionists; that, as regards everything not strictly a commercial transaction, that is to say with regard to all loans from Jew to Jew, it was almost the exception that loans bore any interest, when made to satisfy the pressing necessities of life of any one of them. Lastly, we were informed in such a manner as to leave no doubt in our minds, that when a Jew, possessing no personal resources, was compelled to attend to some urgent business at a great distance from his place of residence, he could call on the rabbi, or on the most prominent member of the Jewish com-

munity, and, on stating his case, he would receive a certificate with which he could go across Europe and reach the extreme limits of Asia, welcomed and having his expenses paid by the Jews who resided on the line of his journey, and who everywhere treated him, not as a pauper to whom alms are granted from a sentiment of pity, but as a brother with whom one shares one's all.

We also acquired a new and correct idea of the nature and extent of the powers of the rabbis. As we were laying some stress on the extent of these powers, and on the use which we urged them to make of them, persuaded as we were that, having been given by God himself to his servants in the Temple, they must have considerable authority in the minds of a people whose form of government could in many respects be looked upon as theocratic, they told us that this was a mistaken idea which it became necessary for them to correct. They demonstrated in the most positive fashion, and by means of authorities which could not be rejected, that all filiation with the tribe of Levi had been totally lost at the time of the last dispersion; hence, there no longer existed among them any priesthood, for priesthood was inherent to that tribe, and that in consequence all sacerdotal sovereignty was extinct in them. This doubtless constitutes one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of this people so faithful to its traditions, so attached to its civil and religious customs, this absolute loss of so precious a filiation, the preservation of which should have called forth all the more care, as it alone could render possible in times to come, the exercise of the most sacred ceremonies of the Jewish religion.

Let it be supposed for an instant that, in conformity with the hopes of every good Israelite, the Temple of Jerusalem should ever be rebuilt, its sanctuary could never be filled, the holy sacrifice could not take place in it, unless a

miracle coming from that God who gave the law on Mount Sinai should come and reveal the true descendants of that tribe.

If there are no longer any Levites, priests, or pontiffs, what are then the rabbis? Nothing else but doctors accepted by their co-religionists to read prayers and to perform certain religious and occasionally judicial ceremonies, to perform which, in Judæa itself, and at a time when the law was more strictly observed, the heads of families were considered sufficient. If this view be taken of them, it is easy to understand that the influence of these rabbis, based merely on the respect in which they are held, inspire no other authority than that which is derived from the confidence felt in them, and hence how impossible it became for us to get their counsels accepted as bearing the stamp of authority. Such being the condition of things, it is sufficiently explained why the rabbis considered themselves compelled to preserve the attitude of reserve which was not understood at the beginning.

This authority of the doctors, the only one in existence among the Jews since the days of their dispersion, the only bond which unites them in their faith, is a phenomenon altogether worthy of attention. From this authority has emanated a supplement to the Mosaic law, known by the name of *Talmud*. It is a somewhat raw compilation of at times random interpretations of the sacred text. It has in times past given rise to many controversies, and still supplies food for dispute, to which can be attributed to a great extent the relaxation of the morals of the Jews. Generally speaking, the rabbis made light of the *Talmudists*, and while admitting the worth of some of them, seemed to look upon them as most dangerous people.

Satisfactory answers to all the questions submitted were at last obtained from the assembly. On the 18th of

September, the Imperial commissioners informed the assembly that His Imperial Majesty, being desirous that these answers should acquire in the eyes of Jews of all countries and for all time the greatest possible authority, had resolved upon calling together a Great Sanhedrin, whose functions were to consist in transforming into doctrinal decisions the answers given by the provisional assembly, as well as those which might result from a continuation of the assembly's labors.

This message met with an enthusiastic reception, and during the days ensuing its presentation, all the measures requisite to carry out the new wish of the Emperor were discussed, adopted, and carried out with both sincerity and eagerness. In conformity with ancient practice, the number of members of the Great Sanhedrin was fixed at seventy-one, exclusive of its presiding officer.

All the rabbis already sitting in the assembly — they numbered seventeen — were called upon to join it. Twenty-nine others were taken from the synagogues of the Empire and of the kingdom of Italy; lastly, twenty-six members to be selected from among private individuals were chosen by the assembly from among its membership by secret ballot. The requisite letters and instructions were at once sent to the French and Italian synagogues.

At the same time, the assembly sent to all its co-religionists throughout Europe a proclamation which informed them of the wonderful event of the convening of a Great Sanhedrin, and which invited them to come to an understanding, for the purpose of sending to Paris men known by their wisdom, and by their love of truth and justice. The effect of this proclamation was not such as had been looked for, and it was almost null in the countries situated beyond the boundaries of the French Empire, of the kingdom of Italy, and of a few states which felt French influence.



There yet remained to be obtained from the assembly that it should admit the necessity of an organization in the practice of its worship, and it was necessary to secure its co-operation towards such an organization. Now this was the very thing most repugnant to it, for it was impossible for it not to perceive that there was no matter in which it would prove more difficult to obtain the acquiescence of its co-religionists. And, indeed, was it not plain that the government would not fail to take advantage of this opportunity to interfere more or less in the inner governing of the synagogues, and to attribute to itself the right of supervision over the rabbis? Now, in the eyes of the latter, this would be, to a certain extent, laying sacrilegious hands on the Ark of the Covenant.

In spite of all these difficulties, which were increased by the unfriendly methods of the president, a solution had to be reached. We resolved, M. Portalis and I, to make an experiment which was fully crowned with success. Taking advantage of a day when M. Molé was away from Paris, we called together the greatest possible number of influential men at the house of M. Portalis, and there, after a session which lasted over six hours, we succeeded, by sound arguments and by kind words, in getting them to adopt a draft of regulations as good as we had a right to expect.

The general assembly adopted these regulations a few days later. A motion was also passed begging His Imperial Majesty to give his assent to these regulations, and to contribute to the payment of the stipends of the rabbis. It was moreover asked (a thing that could but be very agreeable to him) that he should be pleased to inform the local authorities of the Empire and of the kingdom of Italy, that he desired that they should come to an understanding with the consistories, in order to remove the aversion felt by the Jewish youth for the ennobling military career, and thus secure its perfect obedience to the conscription laws.

The inaugural meeting of the Great Sanhedrin took place on the 9th of February, 1807. The most prominent men among the newly elect came almost all to a man from the kingdom of Italy, and especially from the provinces which were formerly a part of the old state of Venice. On the 9th of March, a proclamation was issued, whereby the doctors of the law and the notables of Israel in congress assembled made known that they had constituted themselves as a Great Sanhedrin, in order to find in its body the means and the strength to promulgate religious ordinances in conformity with the principles of their holy law, and all which might serve as both precept and rule of conduct for Israelites. They declared "that this law contains *religious* clauses as well as *political* clauses; that the former are absolute, whereas the latter, being intended to govern the people of Israel in Palestine, are no longer applicable as they do not form a corporate nation. Thus, polygamy, which was permitted by the Mosaic law, being nowadays merely optional and out of usage in the West, is to be considered as prohibited. In France the civil marriage ceremony shall precede the religious one. No repudiation of a wife or divorce is to take place, except according to the forms prescribed by civil law. Marriage between Israelites and Christians shall be considered valid. The Mosaic law enjoining us to look upon as brothers all members of nations believing in God the Creator, all Israelites shall practise, daily and constantly, as an essentially religious duty inherent to their creed, towards all men believing in God the Creator, all acts of justice, and of charity prescribed in the sacred books.

"Each and every Israelite, when treated by the laws as a citizen, shall obey the laws of his country, and conform in all transactions to the terms of the code in use in them. When called upon to serve in the army, they to be dis-

pensed, while their term of service lasts, from all religious observances which might not prove compatible with it. Israelites should give the preference to the exercise of mechanical and liberal professions, and acquire landed property, as so many means of becoming attached to their country, and of being held there in general esteem.

“In conformity with the Mosaic law, usury shall be indiscriminately forbidden, not only as between Hebrew and Hebrew, and as between Hebrew and a fellow-citizen professing another creed, but also in regard to strangers of all nations, such practice being an iniquity abominated in the eyes of the Lord.”

It would have been a hard task for any lawyer or moralist to expound this last prescription with more care and force. This so energetically conceived declaration was unanimously adopted. The general assembly promptly joined to this declaration an address to the Emperor, and a resolution intended to render secure and complete the effect of the declaration. This led it, as a natural consequence, to express a hope that His Majesty, thus assured of the happy results which were to produce towards the repression of abuses, the decisions just reached as a whole in so imposing a form, would, in his great wisdom, be pleased to consider, if it would not be advisable to put an end to the suspension of proceedings taken for the recovery of mortgages, in the departments affected by the decree of the 30th of May, and that this should occur at the time of the expiration of the delay laid down in that decree.

It therefore expressed a wish that His Majesty would be pleased to take such measures as he would deem the most efficient to prevent that it should in future become possible for a small number of Israelites, by means of a few mortgages which they might get registered, to do injuries to private fortunes such as had previously given cause for

complaint, and the shame of and the punishment for which had but too often fallen upon the whole body of their co-religionists. Never were greater attempts made, with the frankest and most sincere intentions, to obtain a reform so long prayed for by all enlightened minds; and never was such an opportunity tendered to the Jewish race since its dispersion. Many centuries will perhaps roll by ere so favorable an opportunity is again presented to them.

The Emperor, whose attention was diverted by political matters from the undertaking which had so long occupied his thoughts, neglected to take advantage of the overtures made to him. The delay, which, by the decree of the 30th of May, 1806, suspended the enforcing of Jewish claims, was further extended. The notification of this, made by simple ministerial circular, greatly disheartened the Jewish population.

Pursuant to the orders which we had received, the Great Sanhedrin was dissolved on the 6th of April, 1807, and the draft of a decree was submitted for discussion to the Council of State. The ideas of the Emperor had undergone a change unfavorable to the Jews, doubtless in consequence of the impression produced on him by the Jewish populations of Germany and of Poland. M. Molé's system was to prevail, in spite of the efforts of M. Portalis and of myself. Yet we succeeded in getting sanctioned in their entirety the regulations which we had taken so much trouble to get adopted with regard to the organization of Jewish worship, and for its inner government throughout the breadth of the French Empire and of the kingdom of Italy.

Provisions of a law dealing with the effects of the suspensory decree, sent after a lengthy delay from the headquarters of the Emperor, were of such severity that I do not hesitate to say that they violated all rules of equity.

This ends all I have to say about this singular and

interesting episode of my début in my political career. It was most instructive, not only through the actual facts I learnt, but also through the insight it gave me into how affairs were carried on or brought to a termination under the man whom destiny had placed so far above our heads. It was for me a first warning that there existed more uncertainty and instability than was generally believed in his plans and in his determinations. And yet, as appertains to genius alone, even his passing ideas left profound traces. Two important results have remained of this great undertaking, viz. the organization of Jewish society in France, and the doctrinal manifesto of the Great Sanhedrin.



## CHAPTER XI

War with Prussia — France's enthusiasm after Jena — General desire for a durable peace — Napoleon's threatening attitude at Berlin — The continental blockade — Its hardships and prodigious results — Matters leading up to war with Spain — Napoleon again prepares for war — Napoleon's vast amount of correspondence — An aggressive march made by the Russians — Battle of Eylau — An opinion of General Jomini — The siege of Dantzic — The victory of Friedland — The peace of Tilsit — Napoleon's influence over the Emperor Alexander — Prussia's humiliation — Gustavus IV., King of Sweden, deprived of his crown — Denmark becomes France's ally.

At the time I joined the Imperial government, in June, 1806, Napoleon had reached the height of power and glory. His authority, which had been established at home by the ascendant of his genius and the splendor of his early victories, was still further strengthened by his recent triumphs; but it was also at the mercy of the dangers which his too great faith in his star was to draw down upon him. His enemies well knew the many opportunities which the luck of war brings even to those whom it has been cruel to for so long a time.

It was therefore in order that coalitions should follow each other unceasingly, and that the new Emperor should defy them with the tenacity and haughtiness of his pretensions. Still, there was a perfect sense of security felt, not only by those who were more or less associated with the new government, but even by the greater and more notable part of the nation. I shared in that feeling, although I can understand its existence nowadays only by taking into

consideration the awful state of anarchy wherein we had dwelt during the years preceding the Imperial régime. With little anxiety, therefore, did I see the breaking out of the war with Prussia, following close upon the one with Austria. The spring of 1806 had been taken up with parleying and negotiations, and, it must fain be said, with mutual trickeries which at last led up to the explosion. Fox was perhaps at that time the only statesman in Europe who sincerely desired peace. Every hope reposing on his honest intentions was destroyed by his death, and the ministry which succeeded him showed itself as ardently in favor of war as Pitt had been.

As I have spoken of trickery, it behooves me to mention the occupation of Hanover. Prussia was bent on war, and her preparations during September left no doubt whatever as to her intentions; but, her mind once made up, and in spite of her confidence in her own strength, she was not blind enough to hesitate calling upon Russia for help, and upon England for subsidies and support. Nothing of all this could be denied her, and she experienced no difficulty in obtaining it; but the enemy with whom she had to deal was not the one to give her time to avail herself of all these resources. He was not one to allow himself to be forestalled, and indeed he soon assumed the offensive. In the twinkling of an eye his army was on the banks of the Saale, at the gates of Saxony. This movement took place with no less precision and rapidity, but with fewer obstacles to be surmounted than in the campaign leading up to Austerlitz. The result of the first engagements was at the very outset disastrous for the Prussian army and royal family. Prince Louis was killed in the first fight. He had been one of the most ardent promoters of the war. In addition to his remarkable bravery, he possessed all the qualities which go towards making an idol of a prince in the eyes of his

soldiers, and many hopes were centred in him. What followed was in harmony with the beginning. I am not going to dwell on this prodigious campaign, whose rapidity had in it something of the supernatural, as I have already stated that I intended to leave to others the care of dealing with the military portion of the period during which I lived. I will therefore only speak of battles, victories, and defeats, for the purpose of showing the moral effect produced by them, and the political consequences arising therefrom.

Prussia, which for about half a century had advanced step by step to the first rank among military powers, was laid low at the first clash of arms. What remained of the old generals of the Great Frederick, the Duke of Brunswick, General Möllendorf, and so many others, either lost their lives on the battle-field of Jena, or as a result of the rout, the remnants of their former military reputation. Seventeen days sufficed to place the French army in possession of the Prussian capital, and the end of November saw it on the opposite side of the Vistula, after taking Cüstrin, Spandau, Lübeck, and Magdeburg, the last named reputed to be the most strongly fortified town in the Prussian kingdom, and occupying all the States belonging to it with the exception of Silesia and the fortress of Colberg in Pomerania.

Enthusiasm rose to the highest pitch in France. Nothing now seemed impossible. Still, in the midst of this quite natural intoxication, it was possible to notice the strength acquired by a certain feeling, which from that date did not cease growing, but which the victorious Emperor too greatly ignored, and which will later on explain the errors of the last days of his reign.

France was no doubt proud of all these victories, but she wished to reap the fruits of them, and, to her eyes, the first

of them was peace, a glorious one, but especially a lasting one. Moderation in the hour of triumph could alone ensure such a result, and the French character, which is naturally generous, indulged in thoughts of such a moderate use of victory. So it was that people nourished the illusory idea that the man who had risen so high could not be deficient in the only quality liable to make his conquests secure. At every battle won, at each town taken, the first impulse was to suppose that this fresh success was the pledge of a peace which would not be long in coming.

Was such a hope founded on reason? Did it, moreover, harmonize with the character one might assume to be that of the man who for the past ten years had not ceased taking the most formidable chances, and who had always come out of his ventures in so singularly fortunate a manner? There are good reasons for doubting this, but still the illusion must have been a most natural one, for few people were without it, even among the men who seemed the most closely initiated into the secrets of our political situation. In the Council of State, the veterans of the Revolution, whom long experience should have rendered better advised, yielded to the prevailing enthusiasm. It is so natural for the wish to be father to the thought!

No sooner was Napoleon in Berlin, than he not only acted and spoke as an angry conqueror, but affected the speech and the attitude of a sovereign giving commands to his subjects. Loyalty to the prince who had fled at his approach was treated as an act of rebellion, and, in his indignation against the opposition of a portion of the nobility which still held communication with the unfortunate king, he exclaimed, in the very halls of the palace of the Great Frederick: "I will so humble this Court nobility that it shall be reduced to begging its bread." In his proclamations and bulletins he constantly coupled threats with

insults. Misfortune, which should be sacred, was not even respected in the person of the Queen of Prussia. This conduct was far from affording any reassuring preliminaries towards the peace so ardently prayed for. But all this was nothing when compared with a measure taken in the hour of the intoxication of victory, and which, by erecting a so to speak insurmountable barrier between France and England, condemned each of these two powers to entertain no hopes of peace and rest until its rival was completely destroyed.

I refer to the decree promulgated at Berlin on the 21st of November, 1806, which laid the first foundations of what the Emperor was to style, later on, the continental system. The British Isles were declared in a state of blockade. All correspondence and all commerce with them were prohibited. Every British subject, whatever his station in life, found in countries occupied by the French or by their allies was to be made a prisoner of war. All merchandise hailing from British sources, and of whatever kind, was declared a lawful prize.

There is no doubt that such a determination was inspired by the ardent desire of wreaking vengeance on an enemy who might justly be considered as the soul and mainstay of every coalition formed against France. It is also certain that so extreme a measure was looked upon as merely a fair reprisal for the blockading by England of all ports situated in states with which she was at war.

Napoleon flattered himself with the idea of having found the means to deal a blow at his most deadly opponent in the matter nearest his heart. Seeing himself master of the greater part of the European coast, at least enjoying a domination over the mouths of the principal rivers of Germany, he persuaded himself that it depended on him to close all Europe's market to England, and thus compel her



to take from him peace at his own terms. The conception was no doubt a grand one, and the measure was no more iniquitous than England's; but the difference lay in the fact that the latter, in her pretensions to a blockade, was not undertaking anything beyond her strength, and did not stand in need of any other nation's co-operation to carry it out.

France, on the contrary, was entering upon an undertaking which could not be put into execution without the voluntary or enforced co-operation of all European powers. It was therefore sufficient, in order to render it fruitless, and the future went to prove this, that a single one of these powers, unable to submit to the privations imposed on it, should either announce its firm determination not to lend a hand in the matter, or should be content with finding ways of eluding it. Granted that it was feasible to coerce all countries into co-operation, there still would remain unwilling allies, who would need watching and checking. It would become necessary to devise some remedy, or at least some mitigation, in order that they might not weigh too heavily, of the sacrifices to be endured under the régime of privations about to be so universally imposed, and from which the several contracting parties would have to suffer, doubtless, to a various but very considerable extent.

Not only was England in a position to supply the Continent with the numerous products of her industry, but she also controlled almost the entirety of all colonial wares and provisions. Hence it would, in the first place, become necessary to have recourse to all possible means calculated to make continental industry supply that which English industry would no longer furnish. Again, with regard to colonial products, some of which, such as sugar and coffee, were almost indispensable necessities of life, and several of which were the actual raw material on which depended

the manufactures which it was proposed to create, it was necessary to devise a means for allowing them the right of entry, but in a proportion calculated on the strictest necessity, and, if possible, by means of an exchange favorable to the natural products of the Continent.

So it happened that, through the most persevering and at times the most ingenious efforts, by the aid of a succession of decrees, and with the help of that strange invention of licenses which were nothing but organized smuggling, continental industry, or rather French industry, backed up with a million bayonets and with an auxiliary force of coast guards, succeeded in meeting the demands of a vast competition, and in deriving large profits.

In this respect, the results were prodigious, and as happens not infrequently in the case of all the works of genius, even in its vagaries, several of these results survived the force which created them. The consumer, it must be admitted, dearly paid for the progress and the consolidation of this industry. For several years he had to suffer from the exorbitant rise in price of the most necessary commodities. As an instance of this, he paid, for six or seven years, six francs for a pound of sugar, and in the meanwhile the product of the best vineyards in France remained unsold.

Another most serious event had occurred in Europe simultaneously with the opening of that memorable Prussian campaign, but hardly any attention had been paid to it. It contained the germ of that terrible Peninsular War, which was the worm that ate its way into the power and good fortune of Napoleon. Impatient to escape from the ascendancy of French power, the favorite who in those days governed Spain thought he could discern in the new storm which was breaking out in Northern Germany a good opportunity for shaking off a yoke which pressed heavily

on him. On the 5th of October he issued a proclamation, wherein, making reference to dangers and glory, to an enemy who remained nameless, and to acts of treachery which he did not specify, he uttered a call to arms. This outburst was plainly directed against the head of the French government, but the latter showed himself sufficiently prudent not to let it appear that he so understood it, and postponing his vengeance, he feigned to believe that this challenge, proceeding from an ally until then submissive, could not be intended for himself. Nevertheless, one is justified in assuming that from that day he vowed to destroy the monarchy which thus dared to defy him, and there can be no doubt that he was delighted with the pretext thus offered him of depriving the Bourbons of the crown of Spain, as he had deprived them of their sovereignty in Naples.

The months of October and November, replete with the brilliant successes which had placed on such a pinnacle the glory and fortunes of Napoleon, saw therefore the birth of two events, the consequences of which were to compass his downfall: the continental blockade and the Peninsular War.

An ill-defined uneasiness took hold of our minds with the advent of the end of December. No serious negotiation for peace had been heard of. Saxony had alone lent a willing ear to the overtures made to her, and which she was not in a position to reject. She had completely abandoned Prussia, and had entered into the Rhenish Confederation. A decree issued at Berlin on the organization of the National Guard in France seemed, moreover, to indicate the intention of the chief of the state of securing at home a reserve force which would allow him to dispose of his active forces abroad, and shortly afterwards a levy of eighty thousand conscripts, which was ordered to take place in

1807, gave proof that he intended to derive every possible benefit from his triumphs.

And indeed, we were soon to learn that the Emperor had determined upon remaining in the midst of his cantonments, and was making Warsaw his headquarters. It was learnt simultaneously that the last campaign had been a severe one. Our troops had found themselves face to face with the Russian army, and this had put an entirely new aspect on the war. The right bank of the Vistula had been occupied only as the result of bloody engagements; the fight at Pultusk had been especially stubborn, and the French army had there suffered heavy losses; for the first time it had had to deal both with the cold weather and with the soldiers of the North, and it had required all the vigor of Marshals Lannes and Davout to win an advantage which merely amounted to a retreat of the enemy, a retreat carried out under the cover of night.

It became evident that the war was to become of an entirely new kind, that we were about to face an adversary whose temper was far stronger than that of the Prussian battalions which had so easily been disposed of at Jena, and that in the future victory would have to be dearly purchased.

The Emperor, but recently seated on his throne, must have enjoyed a most audacious confidence in his prestige, to dare to establish himself at so great a distance from his frontiers, at the furthest line of his operations, at five hundred leagues from his capital, at a time of the year when the ways of communication are of the slowest and most difficult, exposed to the dangerous effect which a bit of bad news, whether true or false, might produce on the greater number of his newly acquired subjects. To take up such a stand, it was necessary that he should feel assured that his government would go on with as much regularity

as if he were in the heart of his Empire, and solely engaged in exercising supervision over its machinery. It was especially necessary that nothing should happen to interrupt or to delay the levies of men he required, either for filling in the gaps caused by war, or for occupying so vast an extent of territory.

Success must in all respects have gone beyond his expectations, for his confidence, however great, however exaggerated it may appear, was not deceived.

The clever fashion in which he succeeded in causing it to be believed, so to speak, that he was omnipresent, cannot be too much dilated upon. Thus an uninterrupted communication between his headquarters and his ministers was established by a service of estafettes, just such as might have existed between Paris and Fontainebleau. The arch-chancellor, who in his absence presided over all the council meetings, who had full authority in all matters, kept him informed of the minutest details, and the Emperor answered everything, even what seemed of the least importance.

As an example, the result of the work of the *comité du contentieux* in the Council of State was laid before him every week by an *auditeur*, who was at the same time entrusted with the portfolios of all the ministries, and who returned without delay with the necessary signatures. This was the time when people began to get accustomed to these rapid journeys, of which they had previously not entertained the idea, and they came to regard as the most simple matter in the world the terrible fatigue incurred in crossing the whole of Europe from one end to another without any stoppages. Gigantic things were coming in vogue.

At the time whereof I speak, Napoleon was always accompanied in his campaigns by his Secretary of State, M. Maret, and no man was ever endowed with more indefatigable ardor for entering into the feelings and



seconding the wishes of a master. His great facility for putting matters into writing, joined with a constant obsequiousness, stood him in lieu of actual talent, and he ended in acquiring an importance which more than once proved fatal to the man he was serving in all sincerity of heart, for no doubts were ever cast on his good faith.

If he praised or admired anything, it was because he really thought it worthy of praise and admiration. Hence it was that at headquarters it devolved upon him to have charge of dealing with the work relating to the administration of the Empire and to attend to the immense correspondence which, in the midst of all his military and political combinations, Napoleon kept up with so punctilious a care concerning matters of all sorts, and in which he made a show of giving his attention to the smallest details. One cannot help pointing out that he often pushed this care to the point of minuteness, or, to speak plainly, to that of charlatanism. The numerous decrees on matters of small moment which appeared in the *Moniteur*, dated from every corner of Europe, bear out the truth of this assertion.

How could any one have allowed himself to become in the slightest degree neglectful, when the example of an indefatigable activity was presented from so high? In this respect the Council of State was beyond all reproach. In addition to its current work, the extent of which I have made known, it was at that time engaged in drafting the Commercial Code, and the debates consequent upon this work were pursued with unflagging attention in the teeth of events the most likely to preoccupy the mind. These debates have remained all the more deeply engraved upon my memory in that they were the first of the kind which I attended. I was even compelled to take part in them, in spite of myself, for I was almost forced to do so by the archchancellor.

The *maîtres des requêtes* could ask to be heard in all cases, but up to that date, and owing to a timidity easily explained, they had availed themselves of this privilege only in cases on which they had to present reports. M. de Cambacérès gave us to understand that it was time that we should cease maintaining this attitude of reserve. M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, learning that I had drawn up a few remarks concerning imprisonment for debt, and that it was my intention to read them, said to me: "What is this? You have written something and you are going to read it? If you do such a thing, you are dooming yourself never to acquire any importance in the Council. Follow my advice, and throw your piece of paper into the fire, and make a long speech. You will speak poorly the first time, and perhaps on a few more occasions, but you will end in getting accustomed to speaking, and if you have any intellectual resources, you will soon carve your way in public affairs." I followed his advice, and thus acquired the little talent which rendered secure my political existence.

Nevertheless, military operations were soon to be resumed in all their activity. The month of January had seen only a few isolated engagements between detached bodies of troops; but, early in February, the Russian army having made some rather threatening movements, the object of which was plainly to hurl the French army across the Vistula, the Emperor thought the time opportune to advance against the Russians with the greater part of his forces.

Having met with substantial successes in the first encounters, he did not hesitate advancing with a somewhat rash rapidity up to Eylau, where he found himself opposed by the principal army corps of the enemy, entrenched in a strong position, and was compelled to enter into action with a much too weak portion of his troops. For a long time

the result of the day remained in the balance; its bloody details are a matter of history. He finally remained master of the field of battle, but this was the only advantage to set against a heavy loss of soldiers and even of distinguished officers, a loss which was to be felt all the more in an army so far distant from its principal base of support.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The uncertainty of the day's issue was such that on both sides the retreat was ordered during the night. Marshal Davout, who was bivouacking with the most advanced army corps, told a person, who shortly afterwards repeated it to me, that just as he was about to begin a retrograde movement, an officer came to him from the outposts to tell him that there was plainly great commotion in the enemy's bivouac. Thereupon Davout went as close as he could to the spot where the noise could be heard, and, on lying with his ear to the ground, he heard distinctly the rolling away of cannons and powder-carts, and as the rumbling gradually decreased he became convinced that the enemy was in full retreat. He sent this information to the Emperor, who at once gave orders to his troops to hold their positions, and it was in this fashion that the French army remained in final possession of the battle-field.

I may add to this particular, which I am convinced is based on truth, another fact about which I feel equally certain. General Jomini, the author of several excellent works on tactics, and of a pamphlet wherein he showed that the position of the French army, if defeated at Austerlitz, would still have had some resources left, was, at the time, owing to this pamphlet, somewhat in high favor with the Emperor. He was on his staff, and was on the plateau of Eylau when, towards the close of the day, a large mass of troops was seen forming behind the advanced bodies of the Russian army. Feeling sure that this mass was destined to make a last effort on the plateau, and one that would prove irresistible, he let the following words escape from his lips: "I would greatly enjoy being in Benningsen's place." But the latter, instead of attempting this new effort which would have won him the battle, allowed his attention to be diverted by the arrival of Davout's corps, which threatened him on one flank, and it was against this corps that the heavy mass which had attracted Jomini's attention had been brought forward.

But his words were taken up, for next morning Marshal Duroc said to him: "Well, Mr. Jomini, would you still enjoy being in Benningsen's place?" "No," was the answer, "but in that of Prince Charles." These two utterances of a man fully enlightened as to the conduct and chances of great military operations make quite clear, not only the danger which the Emperor ran at Eylau, but also his critical position beyond the Vistula, after the battle, if Austria, whose hostility was not doubtful, had been capable of a bold initiative.

Benningsen, who had missed so fine a chance of immortalizing himself, fell into disgrace at the close of the campaign, and was compelled to seek

The Russian army, on the other hand, beat a safe retreat on Koenigsberg, the capital of Eastern Prussia, and the centre of its resources and supplies, the French army not being in a position to attack it. Nevertheless, owing to its admirable organization, and the powerful will of its chief, it was able to remain in cantonments at a short distance from the battle-field, in spite of the severity of the season.

Napoleon's obstinacy in remaining in this position is one of the stoutest deeds ever performed in any war, and it greatly overawed the enemy. He established his headquarters in a little straggling village known as Osterode, where he continued, with a tranquillity which nothing could disturb, to engage in the customary labors of which I have previously told. In order that nothing should be lacking to characterize the calm state of his mind and the security of his position, it was soon learnt that he had seen fit to enjoy a pleasurable relaxation, by calling to him a Polish gentlewoman of excellent birth, with whom he had contracted a liaison while passing through Warsaw, and who, as a consequence of this journey, had the honor of bearing him a son. This is the only child, the fruit of his passing amours, which can be attributed to him with certainty.

The news of the battle of Eylau had in the meanwhile given birth to varying impressions throughout Europe, and those felt in France could not be otherwise than painful. The Russians, it was said, were plainly of another stamp than the Prussian and Austrian soldiers, and had not the Emperor shown great rashness in seeking them in their

a retreat in Germany, in the environs of Hanover, the town of his birth. M. Beugnot, at that time Minister to the King of Westphalia, often saw him in those days. Benningsen would always bring back the conversation to the day so fatal to him, and would attribute his abandonment of the battle-field to the false and even treacherous reports brought to him to the effect that the Emperor had received important reinforcements at night-fall.

very stronghold? I could plainly see anxiety invade the minds of those who tried to show a bold front. And yet, nothing had been neglected in the published reports to swell the losses of the enemy and diminish our own, and to give prominence to the courage and energy of our troops and the skill of our generals.

The 64th bulletin had shown us the Emperor spending several hours on the battle-field, on the morning after the fight, "amid the dead and dying, who lay in heaps, all the more brought into relief as they were spread out on a sheet of snow. Such a spectacle is fit to inspiré princes with a love of peace and a horror of war."

The three months' sojourn at Osterode was not, it may well be imagined, a three months' rest for the opposing armies. If the two principal bodies remained during this time in observation, and if they did not come to blows, there was nevertheless continual fighting at the extremity of the line of operations, and a number of engagements took place which, at other times, would have been considered as battles, and would have sufficed to render famous the generals under whose orders they were fought.

The Russians were usually the aggressors in these engagements, and they were always vigorously held in check or repulsed. The French were besieging Dantzic. It was a long and difficult operation. General Kalkreuth, who defended the city, did not capitulate until after fifty days' siege from open trenches. This old general was one of the last pupils of the great Frederick, and was the only one in those days to preserve the honor of that famed school.

Dantzic having fallen on the 24th of May, important operations began immediately, which, cleverly conducted on both sides, ended with the decisive battle of Friedland, which Napoleon won on the 14th of June. It is a matter of history how, following upon this success, negotiations



were entered into between him and the Emperor Alexander at Tilsit, on the banks of the Niemen, and how the former secured there a victory greater, perhaps, than any of those in which he took pride. It was not enough that he should, through the ascendancy of his military genius, triumph on many a battle-field over the most formidable of his rivals, but he must subjugate him in the matter of negotiations, by his dexterity of mind, his brilliant conversational powers, and the seductive coloring which he had the art of imparting to the political combinations which he succeeded in getting him to acquiesce in.

Thus not only did he extort from Alexander, under the color of mediation, an alliance against England, and in spite of the plainest interests of the Russian Empire, a complete concurrence in the continental blockade, but he was able to make him relinquish the rôle of generous ally which so well suited his character, and cause him to take a share in despoiling the unfortunate King of Prussia. In vain did the latter beg as a favor that he should be admitted to take part in their conferences; in vain did the queen bring into play all the seductive arts of her mind and beauty; they were compelled to submit to the law of the conqueror in all its pitiless severity.

No one had suffered more from recent events than Gustavus IV., King of Sweden. He had joined the British alliance with Prussia and Russia. He was rash enough to renew the hostilities on the rear of the French army, at the very moment when negotiations were being opened at Tilsit. The consequences of this rash deed were, in the first place, the loss of Swedish Pomerania, of the important stronghold of Stralsund, of the isle of Rügen, and, as to the king himself, the loss of his crown.

As he, of all kings, had alone pronounced in favor of the rights of the House of Bourbon, as he had on several occa-

sions invoked them in his diplomatic correspondence with Prussia and Russia, there is little doubt that Napoleon, who, as a matter of course, was cognizant of this, took every care to raise against him the opposition to which he finally succumbed.

Denmark, although not having to reproach itself with any of the imprudent acts of the King of Sweden, and in spite of its cautious behavior, was destined to see, as early as the month of September, a storm break out over it, which dealt a fatal blow at its maritime power. The continental blockade furnished the opportunity. All means of injuring each other seemed good henceforth to France and England. As Napoleon's troops were occupying Hamburg and Lübeck, the English could scarcely entertain any doubt that they were there with the intention of furnishing Denmark with a pretext to close its doors to British commerce, so they resolved upon forestalling this move.

They had for a long time vainly urged the Danish Court to unite with them against France. Despairing of ever attaining their object, they sent to Copenhagen an expedition under the command of Admiral Gambier and Lord Cathcart. After some fruitless parleying, the bombardment was begun, and in spite of the most vigorous reply from the forts commanding the roadstead, and of the ships moored there, all resistance became useless, when, after a three days' fire, six hundred houses were burnt down, and a capitulation became unavoidable. Admiral Gambier remained in possession of the Danish fleet, which he quickly towed into British ports, having previously loaded it with all the naval stores which he found in the arsenal.

Denmark, deeply hurt at so unexpected an attack, which was, moreover, so contrary to all the usages of nations, quickly threw itself into France's arms, and concluded a treaty of alliance with it. The outrage which the British

government had perpetrated on a neutral power excited to the highest degree the indignation of the Emperor Alexander. Casting aside the rôle of mediator, he no longer hesitated in breaking off all intercourse with that government, and proclaimed anew the principles of armed neutrality. He declared, moreover, that no intercourse should exist between Russia and England until Denmark had received satisfaction, and as long as peace was not concluded between France and England.

## CHAPTER XII

Napoleon's return to Paris—A *Te Deum* sung with great pomp at Notre-Dame—Marriage of Jérôme, the new King of Westphalia, with a daughter of the King of Würtemberg—Magnificence of the ceremony—M. de Talleyrand appointed Vice-Grand Elector—Strained relations between the Emperor and that diplomat—M. Pasquier appointed *procureur général* to the *conseil du sceau des titres*—The methods of M. Decrès, Minister of Marine—Abuses of the Imperial administration and denials of justice—The case of M. Pichon, ex-consul of France in America.

AFTER so many battles fought, so many victories won, and so many obstacles surmounted, after supplementing the triumphs of the general with those of the diplomat, Napoleon was leaving behind him one-half of Germany occupied by his army and was master of the mouths of the Weser, the Elbe, and the Vistula, when, on the 27th of July, he re-entered his capital. His absence had lasted no less than ten months. Never had he been away for such a length of time.

This return was celebrated with public fêtes, which afforded an opportunity for the display of every kind of civil, military, and religious ceremony. Of them all, I particularly recall the *Te Deum* which was sung at Notre-Dame. I was present at it with the other members of the Council of State, and as I had a place in the choir, almost opposite the throne, I studied the Emperor's physiognomy, in quest of the impressions which it revealed. He was obviously pleased with the religious sanction, which, in the eyes of the people, consecrated his glory and his omnipotence; he

set a price on it, all the greater from the fact that up to the time of his coming it had been absolutely denied to all the works of the Revolution, and that it distinguished him from all that had preceded him. I am of the opinion that at no moment of his career did he enjoy more completely, or at least with more apparent security, the favors of fortune. Generally, in the midst of his greatest successes, he affected an anxious air, as if he wished it to be understood that his great designs were not yet accomplished, and that people ought not to think that there remained nothing more to do. The observation which I here record has been repeatedly made by those who have come into close contact with him, and who never found him less approachable than at times when it was reasonable to suppose that some most fortunate happening would open his soul to the sentiments of a more expansive good-nature.

Generally speaking, it was better for any one having a favor to ask of him to approach him in his moments of worry, rather than on the days of his most brilliant successes. His character did not err on the generous side. I think I see him still, as he was on that day, dressed in his state costume, which, though a little theatrical, was noble and fine. His features, always calm and serious, recalled the cameos which represent the Roman emperors. He was small; still his whole person, in this imposing ceremony, was in harmony with the part he was playing. A sword glittering with precious stones was at his side, and the famous diamond called the *Régent* formed its pommel. Its brilliancy did not let us forget that this sword was the sharpest and most victorious that the world had seen since those of Alexander and Cæsar. I remember that M. Beugnot, who sat by me, gave utterance to this thought. Both of us were then far from dreaming that less than seven years would suffice to break it.



Early in September was celebrated the marriage of Jérôme, the new King of Westphalia, with a princess, the daughter of the King of Würtemberg, and the granddaughter, by her mother, of the King of England. It is true that the erecting of the Duchy of Würtemberg into a kingdom was but the recent work of the Napoleonic power, and this alliance might be considered as the wiping out of debt by means of an act of gratitude; but the House of Würtemberg was none the less one of the oldest sovereign houses of Germany, and by this union the Bonaparte race was becoming related to a large number of reigning families.

This king who gave his daughter to Jérôme could not be ignorant of the fact that he had contracted a first marriage in America, with a person of a most honorable family, and that this marriage had been consecrated after the forms and laws of the country where it had been accomplished. The Emperor had declared this union null and illegal, since he, as the chief of the family, had not given his consent to it; but could such a motive, borrowed from the customs of certain sovereign families, be valid out of France, and especially in America?

I was present at the ceremony, which took place in the Tuileries, in the Gallery of Diana. All the magnificence of the most sumptuous of Courts was exhibited on this occasion. The quantity of pearls, diamonds, and precious stones of all sorts, which added their brilliancy to the ladies' attire, was really prodigious, and this was all the greater a cause for surprise, when one remembered the distress of the end of the century. A few years had sufficed, then, to bring back the most excessive use of them.

The members of the diplomatic corps and foreigners of high degree, who witnessed this ceremony in large numbers, did not tire of expressing their admiration of it. In order, apparently, that nothing should be lacking to the magnifi-

cence of the Imperial power, all eyes involuntarily turned towards a person of rare beauty who appeared on that day for the first time among the ladies of the Court. She was a Genoese who had recently been appointed reader to the Empress Josephine, and, at the close of the evening, everybody told everybody else that she was, for the time being, the object of Napoleon's preferences.

It is but fair to state that, amid the throng of courtiers who surrounded the sovereigns with their most servile homage, those most noticeable through their excessive adulation were the patriots of 1793, who had given themselves up to the Imperial régime.

Nevertheless, no ceremonies, fêtes, enjoyments, or any amount of adulation were capable of diverting Napoleon's attention from his political calculations and the cares of his immense administration. As a judicious distribution of favors was, to his mind, and with some show of reason, one of the most powerful means of government, he took care that it should occur among the men whose services had been of most value to him. At the head of those he affected to be most particularly pleased with was M. de Talleyrand. Not only had his diplomatic talents stood the test, but, at the most critical period of the campaign, he had been left at Warsaw as quartermaster general. The results of his zeal in fulfilling the duties of this important post had evidently been considered priceless, for the *Moniteur* had more than once informed the public of the Emperor's satisfaction in this connection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the foregoing, I have acquired the certainty that the battle of Eylau caused M. de Talleyrand to seriously reflect on the little solidity of an institution which reposed solely on a life which was forever being risked in the most perilous enterprises. "What should we have done, had he been killed? What should we do if this were to happen any fine day?" he said to the Duke of Dalberg, his principal confidant in those days. And it was agreed that there was no other way out of it but to let the succession devolve upon his brother Joseph, while at the same time

M. de Talleyrand thus seemed to have reached the highest degree of favor, and nobody was surprised that he should aspire to climb to the highest rank in the hierarchy of Imperial dignities. He was merely a minister, and as such had to yield precedence to the great dignitaries. This inferiority was no longer to his taste, and he found a way out of it.

The functions of Grand Elector and of Archchancellor of State no longer existed; the titles of these dignities were still being held, the one by Napoleon's eldest brother, who had become King of Naples, and the other by Prince Eugene, Viceroy of Italy. M. de Talleyrand had himself made Vice-Grand Elector, thus ranking with the Archchancellor and the Archtreasurer. This promotion, in appearance so natural, nevertheless involved important consequences. It became incumbent upon him that he should relinquish the portfolio of foreign affairs, an exigency which did not seem very disagreeable to him, as it ridded him of a mass of routine work which bore heavily upon him.

Moreover, as he considered himself necessary and even indispensable, he too easily persuaded himself that the superiority of his talents and the pretence afforded by the functions of Archchancellor of State, which he was about to exercise, were a sufficient guarantee that his influence would stand forever. The selection of his successor, to which selection he believed he had powerfully contributed, served to increase still further his sense of security.

M. de Champagny, Minister of the Interior, who was notifying Europe that France would immediately and unconditionally content herself with the Rhine as her eastern frontier. From that date is therefore to be dated the trend of M. de Talleyrand's ideas, which led him to husband for future use resources of all sorts, and which consequently made him enter almost immediately upon a line of treacherous conduct towards the man he pretended to serve with such devoted zeal.

chosen to succeed him, was an able but timid man, and of a weak character, and it is precisely for this reason that Napoleon, tired with a minister to whom the public too often attributed the success of his negotiations, had selected him. He wished people to be henceforth fully convinced that he alone conceived all plans, alone came to a determination as to them, and alone presided over their execution. From the day, then, that the portfolio passed into the hands of M. de Champagny, the Emperor worked ostensibly with him alone, and, while showing much good-will towards M. de Talleyrand, he no longer held with him any but the most indispensable conversations, taking special care that he should never be able to interfere in affairs unless by special permission. He might therefore be consulted, but the initiative was no longer his, and, if he secured it occasionally, it could only be by dint of craftiness. This changed condition of affairs, although somewhat sudden, was at first noticed by a few persons only, but it was nevertheless strongly resented by M. de Talleyrand, whose displeasure soon vented itself in the sarcastic remarks which he on the slightest pretence made about his successor.

On the other hand, the Emperor, when thus treating a man who had so long enjoyed his closest intimacy, from whom he had concealed nothing up to that time, knew full well that he was deeply wounding his feelings. Hence he conceived from that time a greater distrust of him, and constantly lent a willing ear to any malevolent insinuations which might reach him concerning M. de Talleyrand. He was aware that he had few scruples; doubts of him therefore found easy access to his mind, and he soon had more reasons than one for entertaining them. On his side, M. de Talleyrand must have searched carefully for the causes of a coldness which was not sufficiently dissembled for him not to notice it. Such was the origin of a falling out between

these two men, a falling out which ended by degenerating into an enmity, the beginnings of which I am all the more anxious to place on record for the reason that its consequences bore the serious results with which everybody is familiar.

My own position remained the same, and nothing made me foresee that it was liable to change. I owed my easy admission into the Council to a position far anterior, and to the desire felt by the Emperor of bringing into his Council of State a few of the names of the old magistracy; but I was thirty-nine years of age, and had consequently settled ideas on many subjects. A stranger to all the deeds of the Revolution, I had nothing to hide, nothing that required forgetting. My fortune, although small, was sufficient for me to enjoy a comfortable and honorable existence. I was therefore completely independent, and not to be classed with the creatures of the Imperial power, ever disposed to sacrifice all to the author of their fortunes.

Napoleon possessed an admirable instinct for discerning and appreciating the dispositions which animated those by whom he was environed. Hence it was that from the beginning he looked upon me as a man from whom one could expect good services might be derived, but who would never belong to him as completely as he liked. It was entirely different with M. Molé, who, endowed with a greater fortune than mine, had entered the Council at the age of twenty-five. His youth, his inexperience of everything that had preceded the Revolution, of which he could nevertheless recall the horrors, had led the Emperor to hope that it would prove an easy matter, after completing his political education, to get entire possession of him, and to derive benefit from the advantages of an illustrious origin and a most distinguished mind.

Hence it was that M. Molé, from the moment of his tak-



ing part in public affairs, became the object of a marked predilection, which was never withdrawn. As for myself, during Napoleon's prolonged absence, and during his Prussian and Russian campaigns, I managed, by dint of assiduous work in the *comité du contentieux*, to attain an honorable position in the Council, and to acquire some consideration.

My labors were fully appreciated by the Archchancellor, and by the Chief Justice, who presided over the committee. Both of them considered it their duty to bring my worth to the notice of the master, immediately upon his return, but this act of kindness had a contrary effect to the one anticipated. It was, in his eyes, wrong for me to seek to rise by my own efforts, and to undertake to make my way, ere he had given the signal for this, and with a backing other than his own. From that time I was treated with most marked reserve. I was not allowed any opportunity for a private interview, and was kept at a distance. Still, I could not complain of any distinctly unkind act, but merely that all marks of favor fell to the lot of such of my colleagues as had been appointed at the same time as myself, and all of them my juniors.

At first I did not feel deeply over these promotions, which consisted in appointments to *préfectures*, doubtless of great importance, but which tempted me little, for such was not the career I wished to follow. It became quite another matter when I saw M. Portalis and M. Molé made Councillors of State, and especially when the latter was at one and the same time appointed director-general of the *ponts et chaussées* (bridges and highways). This post was considered as opening the door to the Ministry of the Interior. I could now no longer conceal from myself the fact that whereas these high favors were being distributed all around me, I was still allowed to remain tied down to the *comité du contentieux*. Moreover, as my name was never the first

called, I was, generally speaking, presided over by a colleague whose senior I was. He would undertake the drawing up of the report, and thus get credit for the whole work.

It was not until during the third year that I was appointed to a rather agreeable position, as it kept me in Paris; but it was one which could not have much importance in the Emperor's eyes, because it did not call for any talent, and carried with it no real influence. It was the post of *procureur général* to the *conseil du sceau des titres*. I owed it to the repeated requests of the Archchancellor, who was the president of this council, and who wished to have in it a man whose methods were known to him, and in whom he might repose confidence.

Nevertheless, it behooves me to add, in order to throw a better light on my personal affairs, that to the little favor shown me for so long a time was due a greater independence in my judgments and the possibility of viewing everything that went on around me with a more observant eye. At the same time, it must not be thought that my ill luck gave birth in me to a feeling of hostility from which would have issued the habit of disparaging everything. Far from it, I still remained an admirer of the extent and power of the genius which presided over our destinies. I still looked upon Napoleon as the only possible and necessary man, as our only security against the return of a revolution the mournful remembrance of which was ever present. But my eyes were closed neither to his faults, nor to his abuses of power, nor to the fatal counsels of his flatterers, nor to the excesses committed by the depositaries of his power. My long connection with the *comité du contentieux*, the numerous complaints which had reached it, and which I had been compelled to look into carefully, although I was not always free to make the cause of justice triumph, had sufficiently enlightened me concerning the dangers of a

power as extended as was his own. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this.

It had devolved upon M. Decrès, on being appointed Minister of Marine, to order the construction and the armament of the Boulogne flotilla. A certain contractor of Rouen had undertaken to build the necessary praams, and, by the terms of his contract, he was to be paid in three instalments, as progress was reported; he duly received the first two-thirds on the strength of official reports, establishing that two-thirds of the praams had been finished; but when they were all built, there seemed to be no way of obtaining the payment of the remaining third from the Ministry of Marine. It was evident that there was no other reason for this denial of justice than that of the uselessness of the barges, as the idea of an invasion of England had been abandoned. The unfortunate contractor, after having exhausted every proceeding to recover his due, and after having vainly begged for it, laid the matter before the *comité du contentieux*, and the Chief Justice, president of this committee, having, according to custom, communicated the petition to the Ministry of Marine, called for all papers filed in its offices in connection with the case. No answer having been vouchsafed to repeated requests in this connection, I, as reporter in the case, was sent personally to demand these papers of the Ministry of Marine.

I sought the chief clerk, M. Jaurier, a man of sterling worth and of most honorable character. I wondered somewhat at his embarrassed mien and at the weakness of his reasons for not handing over the papers to me, so I insisted on seeing them. When he saw at last that it was impossible for him to deny my request any longer, he said to me: "You shall judge whether it is possible for me to lay before you such a record." I was thereupon shown the requests made by the contractor, together with the reports of the

department on his case, each one more favorable to him than the other, but in the margin of which M. Decrès had, by way of decision, written the words: "Let him go and hang himself." His initials had been placed with scrupulous care at the end of this beautiful sentence.

I informed the Chief Justice of this strange method of explaining how decisions were reached, so without preferring any further requests to the Ministry of Marine, the committee rendered a decision favorable to the contractor's claims. I then presented a report of the case to the Council of State, which confirmed the committee's decision; but, it will hardly be believed, the decree which required the Emperor's signature, and which was sent to him in Germany, was never returned. The minister, when informed of the decision of the committee, which was that also of the Council of State, found a way to neutralize its effect, and thus an odious bankruptcy was finally consummated.

Owing to this affair, I fell out completely and openly with M. Decrès, who could not forgive me the warmth I had shown in seeking to undo his injustice. For over three years he never spoke nor even bowed to me, a line of conduct which I heartily reciprocated. One day at last, while seated next to me at the house of some princess or other, he suddenly addressed me as follows: "Well, really, it is quite enough that we should have remained at odds for three years over a silly trifle; for two men of brains like we are, it is time this should come to an end." As for brains, he assuredly had plenty of them. "Would it then be agreeable to you that we should chat a little together? It will serve to dispel the sense of being bored." Upon my replying that all show of rancor had been on his part, that he was free to put an end to the matter whenever it so pleased him, he began talking with me on all kinds of subjects, and from that day on he made a show of speaking

with me more confidentially than with anybody else. A most extraordinary example of this will be given further on.

The methods followed by M. Decrès concerning the praam-builder were also more than once successfully adopted by M. Defermon, in connection with decisions reached by the Council in opposition to his own and to the recommendations of the Finance Committee, over which he exercised despotic sway. Among one of the many melancholy examples of the abuse he made of this power, may be quoted the cancelling of the contract entered into with the parties to whom the Canal du Centre had been farmed. They had taken this canal in a state of complete dilapidation, and had put it in good condition again. They had not hesitated in incurring so heavy an expenditure, in consideration of the long lease granted to them, I believe, for either twenty or thirty years. Their profits had recently become considerable, the trade between the North and South of France having no longer any safe channel but the canal, owing to the risks incurred by maritime navigation. It was there-upon argued that as this chance had not been taken into account in the contract, it constituted a reason for cancelling it. There could not be any more flagrant and impolitic violation of the good faith which should preside over contracts. Nevertheless, the contract was cancelled, but the Imperial decree sanctioning this act, stipulated that the farmers should be freed from all responsibilities and that they should render a statement of account.

Such a statement of account was indeed filed, but most unfortunately also it was subjected to the scrutiny of the Finance Committee, which refused to allow the very high interest claimed, and which had to be paid at the rate current when money was borrowed for commencing the work. In spite of the justice of these claims being clearly proven, the committee persevered in its determination to reduce the rate of interest to the legal one.



The greater part of the Council was opposed to this interpretation, which M. Louis and myself fought with all our might, but M. Defermon nevertheless carried the day, as M. Decrès had done in the case of the barge-builder, by means of a direct correspondence with the Emperor. A short time after, the man principally interested in the lease, seeing no possible means by which he could meet his engagements, blew out his brains. He had first written to the reporter of the Finance Committee a letter which must have cost the latter some suffering, for in it the unfortunate man positively declared that his (the reporter's) unjust treatment of him was alone cause of his having been driven to so fearful an extremity.

As a last touch to the melancholy side of the picture of the Imperial administration, which came within the jurisdiction of the Council of State, I must say a few words about the case of M. Pichon, who had been a consul in America, and from whom it was sought to recover very large sums, or rather to whom the refunding of sundry disbursements he had made, while in the United States, in harboring the remnants of the expedition to Santo Domingo were refused. The Finance Committee, with M. Defermon ever at its head, persisted in not being able to find such expenditure sufficiently justified or authorized, as if, in so imperative a circumstance, it was possible to conform to all the exigencies of red-tapeism, and to await instructions which had to be sent across the Atlantic.

M. Pichon secured leave to come and plead his case before the Council. He conducted it with rare ability and with an imperturbable presence of mind. His defence took up two sittings; in my opinion, it was unanswerable. Yet the decision went against him and on this occasion the majority of the Council of State followed the committee's lead. The Archchancellor contributed greatly to this result. Still, the

question had been fully discussed; M. Regnaud had not spared himself in the matter, and the *maîtres des requêtes*, who generally took but little part in the discussion of matters which had not been brought under the notice of the Council by one of their number, had not hesitated in taking part in the case in point. M. Louis spoke repeatedly in opposition to the recommendation of the reporter, but our efforts proved altogether fruitless, and it but remains to tell here that in this instance the Council of State made itself the instrument of Napoleon's revenge. He could not forgive the consul for not having prevented the marriage of his brother Jérôme, the marriage he had since so despotically annulled, but which had nevertheless been the source of much trouble to him. The reason governing the proceedings and the adverse decision was but too patent, and it became all the more manifest when, shortly afterwards, King Jérôme felt himself in honor bound to make some compensation to the unfortunate M. Pichon, who was ruined almost completely by the decree rendered against him, besides being deprived of a post which he had filled with honor. He was called to Westphalia, where he received the title and performed the functions of Councillor of State.

These lapses from duty are not sufficient to make one forget the services rendered by the Council of State and the ability of its members. As long as the Imperial régime lasted, it cannot be denied that the most talented men in all branches were called to become a part of it. There is no better proof of this than the one afforded by the number of men which the Council supplied to the royal government after the Restoration.

Thus, for instance, the *maîtres des requêtes* to which I belonged furnished five ministers: Messieurs Louis, Molé, Portal, Chabrol, and myself. The grand footing on which

Napoleon had placed that council was such as to enlarge the sphere of one's ideas and to give to one's faculties all the development of which they were capable; and then the highest legislative, administrative, and sometimes even political matters were taken up in it. Did we not see, for two consecutive winters, the sons of foreign sovereigns come and complete their education in its midst?

These princes, one of whom was the hereditary prince of Bavaria, and the other, the hereditary prince of Baden, never missed a sitting at which the Emperor presided, and sometimes even they attended when the Archchancellor presided over the Council.

## CHAPTER XIII

Secret treaty concluded between Napoleon and Godoy, Prince of Peace, and favorite of Charles IV. of Spain — Portugal invaded by the French — Abdication of the old King of Spain — His throne given to Joseph Bonaparte — Occupation of Rome by the French troops — Pius VII. addresses a comminatory brief to Napoleon — General uprising in Spain against the French, followed by the insurrection of Portugal — Junot's retreat before the British army — M. de Talleyrand once more comes upon the scene, on the occasion of the interview agreed upon between Napoleon and the Emperor of Russia — The Congress of Erfurt — A study of the serious political questions discussed at this meeting of the two sovereigns — A letter from the Emperor Alexander to the Emperor Napoleon — A scrutiny of the diplomatic action of M. de Talleyrand; his astounding duplicity and the reasons of his complaisance towards Austria — The *Comédie-française*, with Talma, at Erfurt.

DURING the autumn and winter of 1807–1808 the Emperor's mind became absorbed with a twofold project: the prosecution of the struggle against England, and the invasion of Spain. The most natural reprisals for the burning of Copenhagen were doubtless an attack directed against Portugal, England's interests being intimately wrapped up in those of that portion of the Peninsula; but, to reach Portugal, it became necessary to cross Spain, a thing not to be done without the consent of that power; for if, in order to march upon Lisbon, he once obtained a free passage through Spain for his troops, this passage would be likely to afford him opportunities of which he would assuredly avail himself.

Everything was brought into play to make Charles IV.'s weak government fall into the trap. His all-powerful

minister, the Prince of Peace, sorely needed forgiveness for his imprudent proclamation of the foregoing year. By employing as go-between an intriguer, by name Yzquierdo, who, for some time past, had been the favorite's agent near the French Cabinet, they succeeded in secretly concluding with him the most extraordinary treaty which has perhaps ever been drawn up.

French troops, to the number of at least forty thousand men, were to enter Spain immediately, in order to co-operate with that country in the conquest of Portugal. The King of Etruria was to surrender his kingdom to Napoleon, and receive in exchange the Portuguese province of Entre-Douro-e-Minho, assuming the title of King of Northern Lusitania. The Algarves and Alentejo were to be erected into a principality in favor of Godoy, Prince of Peace. The King of Northern Lusitania and the Prince of the Algarves were to hold Charles IV. as their protector or suzerain. The Emperor of the French bound himself to recognize the King of Spain as Emperor of the two Americas. The remainder of Portugal was to remain *in statu quo* until the advent of a general peace.

Hence the branch of the House of Bourbon which Napoleon had put on a throne in Italy, was to lose this throne, to exchange it for a sovereignty, which was to be conquered, in Portugal, and side by side with which was placed the principality of the guilty favorite, who scrupled not to deliver up, together with the security of his country, that of a royal family which had loaded him down with so many gifts; while the king, who still sat on the throne of Spain, was not shrewd enough to read in the fate of the King of Etruria, the one in store for himself.

What were Godoy's titles to so exalted a position? His scandalous liaison with the queen. Combinations of such a character bear within themselves the principle of their



ruin, and it may be said of the one in point that none was ever more fatal to him who conceived it and to those who were vile and rash enough to become his accomplices. In this treaty, concluded at Fontainebleau on the 27th of October, 1807, is written beforehand the history of all Spain's misfortunes, of the disastrous war of which it was the scene, and of the events which proved the commencement of Napoleon's downfall.

Portugal was invaded by the forty thousand French, whose safe passage through Spain had been guaranteed, and, as a first consequence of this invasion, the King of Portugal, his family, and his Court left for Brazil. Such was the origin of the separation of the South American colonies from their metropolis, for it was through giving an asylum to their king flying from the approaching French legions, that they learnt that their interests could be held distinct from those of Europe.

Later on, it will again be their loyalty to the cause of their legitimate sovereign which will lead the Spanish colonies on the road to independence, and these great events are ever to be the result of Napoleon's ambitious conceptions.

It was fated that the name of this man should be bound up with the greatest events of the century. I was at Fontainebleau, when the sudden departure of M. de Luna warned us of the storm which was about to burst over Portugal. He was hurrying away, in order to conjure it by begging his sovereign to make certain concessions which alone could stay the Emperor's hand. The first of these was a complete renunciation of the British alliance and the absolute closing of ports to English ships, and, in order to ensure the execution of this measure, the admittance into the kingdom of a French army, which would garrison all important towns. It was impossible to believe that such

conditions would be accepted, unless a complete state of degradation were presupposed. No one expected, or, to speak the truth, no one desired such a result in the Imperial cabinet, for it might run counter to the carrying out of the secret treaty.

It is not for me to relate the manœuvres which brought trouble and dissension to the royal family of Spain, setting father, mother, favorite, and son at daggers drawn, nor the happenings at Aranjuez, which led up to the abdication of the old king and the departure of the royal family for Bayonne; these matters are fully known. Everything was consummated by June, 1808, and King Joseph left Naples to come and occupy the throne of Spain, while the old king, the queen, and the Prince of Peace went to live at Compiègne.

Towards the close of the year, it was the Pope's turn to be subjected to Napoleon's imperious demands. Soon, under the pretence that the Pope had refused to close the ports of his States to England, and that he was tolerating in Rome reunions of emissaries of powers hostile to France, the French troops entered Rome. As an answer to this deed of violence, Pius VII. addressed a comminatory brief of excommunication to his spoliator. In this document, Napoleon is still styled the *consecrated and sworn* son, and the enumeration of the Pope's grievances against him ends with the following sentence, which is so little in harmony with the ideas of the day: "You will compel us to make, in the humility of our heart, a use of the power which Almighty God has placed in our hands."

Disregarding this threat, Napoleon, by a decree dated the 2d of April, annexed to the Kingdom of Italy the legations of Ancona, Urbino, Macerata, and Camerino. On the following day, the Pope's legate thought it behooved him to leave Paris, and from that day up to the days preceding his

downfall, the Emperor lived in a permanent state of hostility, not only with the Pope as temporal sovereign, but with the pontiff, the visible head of the Catholic Church.

Not the least worthy of notice in his history is the fact, and it is perhaps the one which best goes to show to what a point he had succeeded in establishing his authority at home, of the facility with which, in spite of this state of hostility, he retained, not only the loyalty of the Catholics, who composed the immense majority of his subjects, but also that of the clergy which had gone over to him only after receiving the permission or even the order of the Sovereign Pontiff to that end. The documents published in those days by Champagny, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to account for the invasion of Spain and the seizure of the Papal States, would afford curious reading nowadays. It would be seen, as an example, that the pretext seized upon to justify the last-named deed is attributed to the refusal of His Holiness to enter into an Italian league, the object of which was to secure quiet to Italy.

"Such a refusal," said the French Minister, "is a sufficient justification of war; the first result of war is conquest, and conquest's first result is a change of government."

Less than a year after the Treaty of Tilsit, the armies of Napoleon invaded Portugal, and the House of Braganza was reduced to seek an asylum in its American possessions. The throne of Spain was given by him to one of his brothers, while the Spanish branch of the House of Bourbon was more or less disguisedly a prisoner in France. The members of the same family settled in Italy, were expelled therefrom, and their states united to the French Empire. The Kingdom of Italy was enlarged with the Roman legations, the remainder of the Papal States was occupied by the French troops, and the Pope himself was to all intents and purposes a prisoner in his capital. Lastly,

the Kingdom of Naples was given to the Grand-Duke of Berg, Murat. This left the Grand-Duchy at the disposal of the Emperor. All this upsetting of the order of things, and all this usurpation were, it was argued, consequent upon the necessity of keeping up the struggle entered upon with England. The effects of this policy were soon to make themselves heavily felt.

Previous to Napoleon's departure from Bayonne, which place he did not leave until he had the assurance that nothing could prevent the entry of his brother Joseph into Madrid, the uprising in Spain had assumed a threatening aspect. It originated at Cadiz, where the insurgents got possession of the French fleet, which had sought a refuge in that port ever since the battle of Trafalgar. This fleet, which still consisted of six men-of-war and a frigate, carried crews numbering together four thousand men, who thus became prisoners.

The insurrection, which spread from town to town, was directed with great ability by a junta having its headquarters in Seville, and in spite of the eighty-four thousand French soldiers scattered over the surface of the Peninsula, and commanded by two marshals and Generals Duhesme and Dupont, it could be truly said that the national resistance showed its head in all directions. It had been necessary for Bessières to win the battle of Rio-Seco to enable Joseph to reach Madrid.

The Emperor had left Spain, when he received the news of the capitulation signed at Baylen by General Dupont. This was the first serious reverse in Napoleon's military career. In order that nothing should be wanting to the effect which it was to produce on the public mind, the news arrived simultaneously with that of the evacuation of Madrid by King Joseph. The progress made by the insurrection had so frightened this prince that on the 20th of

July he made up his mind to leave his capital, where he had resided only a week. His retreat did not end until he reached Vittoria.

The insurrection of Portugal was to follow that of Spain, and the loss of the battle of Baylen had destroyed all hope of any assistance being given to the French troops which occupied Lisbon. Very soon an English army landed near Oporto, and General Junot, after losing a battle, found himself compelled to consent to a capitulation which sent him and his army back to France. The terms of the convention were at least honorable, and they were faithfully carried out by the English, who with little delay landed the capitulating troops on French shores.

On returning, the Emperor travelled slowly through the provinces on the line of his journey. He was welcomed everywhere with loud cheers, and there was no town of importance where guards of honor did not form spontaneously, and fight for the favor of becoming his escort. These guards of honor were, generally speaking, composed of young men of fortune and of high social standing, and the old nobility showed no repugnance to serve on them. But what is deserving special notice is the way in which he was received in the departments once the scene of the Vendéan war. There, the enthusiasm shown by the population was greater than anywhere else. This was a tribute to the man who had put an end to the disturbances and crimes of the Revolution, and had re-established Catholic worship.

No sooner had he reached his capital, when came the announcement of his departure for Germany. He had agreed to meet the Emperor Alexander at Erfurt, and so he started on the 23d of September. This meeting, which had been prepared months ahead, had become daily more and more urgent. An understanding must be come to with



regard to the new incidents which had occurred since the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit; the consequences arising therefrom had to be disposed of, and complete harmony with Russia was all the more imperative from the fact that, wishing to triumph over Spain's resistance, the necessity of sending large reinforcements to that country had compelled Napoleon to recall a considerable part of the troops which occupied the North of Germany. These troops were already homeward bound, and the heads of columns were already beginning to march across France.

The Emperor, it is true, did not neglect anything that could weaken the power whose enmity he must especially provide against, and he imposed on Prussia a convention whereby it consented to the occupation of the fortified towns of Glogau, Stettin, and Custrin by French garrisons, and bound itself to keep a standing army of only forty thousand men. It is interesting to note the extent of the foresight of this mind, which prosecuted so many plans at one and the same time, without ever relinquishing its hold on any one of them, however far back its conception dated, owing to difficulties arising in the execution of the one latest conceived. M. de Talleyrand formed part of the suite of the Emperor, whom he had not accompanied to Bayonne. The part he had taken in the Tilsit negotiations, as well as in those which had been carried on in Germany for the past ten years, apparently made it believed that there was some advantage to be derived from his presence and from his former connections.

This is the place to dwell once more on the strange position of this man, who always seemed to enjoy the greatest confidence, and this at the very time when in reality he did not inspire any, and did not obtain it; who, on his side, appeared animated with the most sincere zeal, when it was impossible for those who had any intercourse

with him to have any doubt as to his discontent. I often saw him in those days at the house of one of my relations, a woman of intellect, who, for some months past, had become very intimate with him, and in whose *salon* he spent many of his evenings; her social circle was small, and consequently no restraint was put upon him. Owing to this kind of intimacy, his actual frame of mind was readily penetrated, and I easily observed that, consumed as he was with a desire for fault-finding, he considered himself but little bound by any engagements, the result of his former deeds and utterances. Thus the Spanish business could hardly escape his criticism, which was in this case but too well grounded. His more or less biting sarcasms bore on the lack of ability and on the blunders of M. de Champagny and M. Maret. They stopped short at the manner in which affairs were being managed, but did not attack the transaction in the main, and this reserve was all the more incumbent upon him from the fact that the idea of invading the Spanish kingdom, and of expelling the House of Bourbon, was not only not foreign to him, and had never been condemned by him, but, from all appearances, it originally emanated from his brain.

There can indeed be no doubt that upon his arrival in Poland, immediately after the insane warlike effusion of the Prince of Peace, he was mainly instrumental in calling the attention of the Emperor to the benefit that could some day be reaped from it.

It was probably at that time that he gave utterance, while in the Imperial tent, to a sentence which he was very proud of, for I have heard him repeat it again and again. It ran as follows: "The crown of Spain has, since Louis XIV., belonged to the family reigning over France, and there is no cause to regret the cost in money and blood of setting Philip IV. on the throne, for he it was who alone rendered

secure France's preponderance in Europe. This crown is therefore one of the finest gems of the inheritance of the great king, and this inheritance must fall in its entirety to the lot of the Emperor; he must not, he cannot, abate one jot of his rights to it." I am likewise certain that this phrase was oftentimes repeated by Napoleon himself. Both of them then had equally adopted it, but with which of them did it originate? Without speaking with certainty, it may at least be said that it bears the earmarks of M. de Talleyrand, and of his way of presenting subjects. It was therefore quite natural that he had not determined upon what attitude he should take at the time of the Bayonne events. When the Emperor left that town,<sup>1</sup> to return to Paris, M. de Talleyrand received an order to go and meet His Majesty at Nantes, and this order gave him the liveliest satisfaction.

As it was intended to make use of him at Erfurt, he was warmly welcomed and made much of. On the occasion of their first meeting, Napoleon even went so far as to make a pretence of granting him a new lease of confidence, which bore all the appearances of abandon. When I saw M. de Talleyrand on his return from the interview, his physiognomy beamed with contentment. I dined with him on the

<sup>1</sup> Since this has been written I have seen (in 1829) the correspondence which passed between M. de Talleyrand and Napoleon, during the latter's stay at Bayonne. It follows therefrom, that not only did M. de Talleyrand, at that time, not show the slightest objection to the policy adopted by Napoleon, but that, on the contrary, it met with his fullest approval. The way in which Napoleon, in the course of this correspondence, traces the portraits of all the members of the royal family of Spain is piquant in the extreme. When informing M. de Talleyrand that he is sending Ferdinand to Valençay, he enumerates with care all the precautions that are to be taken to prevent his escape, and even goes so far as to busy himself with the distractions which may be permitted him. And, be it noted, the principal one thrown in his way was given him by a young person who lived at the time under M. de Talleyrand's roof. This liaison, of which Ferdinand soon became distrustful, did not last as long as it was desired to.

very day of his arrival, with some of those who had returned from Bayonne, among others, with the Abbé de Pradt, the Duke de San Carlos, and Canon Escoïquiz. M. de Talleyrand did not cease extolling the talents of the last named, and the services he had rendered.

The Duke of San Carlos and the Canon were indeed credited with enjoying Ferdinand's confidence to a high degree, and both had, while harboring no bad intentions, caused him to fall into the trap at Bayonne. M. de Talleyrand was at that time in so happy a frame of mind that he seemed to look upon it as an honor that his fine château of Valençay should have been chosen as the residence of the Spanish princes. He spoke much of Bessières's great victory at Rio-Seco, and, with the Emperor, compared it to that of Marshal Berwick at Almanza. "Both these victories," he would say, "secured the crowns to the sovereigns on whose behalf they were won."

The Congress of Erfurt is one of the most important events of this epoch. It afforded Europe the spectacle of a reunion of sovereigns and of statesmen rarely met with, and, in spite of the splendor of this reunion, in spite of the many eyes opened wide to observe everything, to discover everything, the determinations come to by the two Emperors remained, with but slight exceptions, impenetrable. I am able to some extent to rend asunder the veil which was at that time thrown over the most important stipulations.

It is first of all necessary to state that, for several months past, very important negotiations had been going on, on the one hand in St. Petersburg, between the Emperor Alexander and M. de Caulaincourt, the French ambassador; and, on the other, in Paris, between Napoleon and M. de Romanzoff, the Russian ambassador. The object of these negotiations was to bring to completion that which had been treated only superficially at Tilsit, and which bore notably

on the partition of Turkey, or at least on the sacrifices which should be demanded of that empire, which was falling into decay, and on the various contingencies which were likely to arise from its disappearance.

Russia manifested great anxiety to make an end of the Ottoman Empire. M. de Romanzoff especially displayed all the more zeal in the matter, from the fact that he seemed to attach to such an issue the crowning act of glory of his name. Napoleon was, on the other hand, desirous of delaying this and of gaining time. It did not suit his purpose that this Eastern question should be seriously dealt with, ere he had brought to a happy termination the one which occupied him in Spain, and so he used all means likely to embarrass and delay negotiations.

Thus, for example, as he fully felt that the Emperor Alexander could hardly consent to Prussia being completely crushed, he required that in case Moldavia and Wallachia should be finally incorporated with the Russian Empire, Silesia should be ceded to him. What was he to do with it? Was it his intention to add it to Poland, and did it enter his thoughts that it afforded him the means of placing Austria between two fires whenever he should see fit to attack it, for it is a fact that this power was at that time one of the principal objects of his animadversion? He had good cause to look upon it as ever ready to join England and to declare itself against him. He had caused M. de Talleyrand to precede him by a few days, and he himself arrived, on the 27th of September, some few hours only before the Emperor Alexander. The Kings of Saxony, Bavaria, Würtemberg, the King of Westphalia (Jérôme Bonaparte), the Grand-Duke Constantine, the Emperor Alexander's brother, Prince William of Prussia, the heirs presumptive of Bavaria, Baden, and Darmstadt, the Dukes of Saxe-Weimar and of Saxe-



Gotha, the Duke of Holstein-Oldenburg, and many other princes arrived in succession. The ministers of the great powers likewise went, Austria sending M. de Vincent, one of the men in whom it reposed full confidence. It would even appear that the Emperor Francis had been desirous of being present in person, but the overtures he made to the effect to the Emperor Alexander having been somewhat coldly entertained, he contented himself with causing M. de Vincent to deliver to Napoleon a letter, the object of which was to explain away, if possible, the warlike preparations which had for some time past been going on in his dominions, and at which the French cabinet had already taken considerable umbrage.

Matters had even gone so far that as early as the 15th of August, M. de Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, had been subjected, at a public audience at the Tuileries, to one of those violent harangues which the Emperor never denied himself the pleasure of whenever he was annoyed. It cannot be said that his foresight on this occasion rested on a weak foundation, for it has been since shown, beyond doubt, that at that very time England had already drawn closer the bonds of an alliance with Austria, which alliance was soon to become an offensive one on the part of the latter.

It is also well to state that these warlike preparations, the object of such suspicion to Napoleon, included the creation of a new body of militia to be known as the Landwehr. This militia, which bore some resemblance to the French National Guard, was nevertheless much more soldier-like, and seemed intended to correspond with the French military conscription. It became the nucleus and the primary model of those citizen levies, which later on rendered the uprising of the Prussian states so easy. However this might be, the Emperor Francis's letter seemed to attain its object,

and the answer sent to it by Napoleon, although extremely haughty, might lead one to suppose that he was satisfied with the explanations he had received.

The reunion at Erfurt lasted until the 14th of October. In addition to the interests of the King of Prussia, in whose favor Alexander obtained some mitigation of the terms previously imposed, three principal questions were discussed and settled, viz.: the new measures which policy demanded should be adopted with regard to England; Russia's affairs with Sweden and Turkey; and lastly, the recent increases of territory acquired by Napoleon both in Italy and in the Spanish Peninsula. The acquisition of Finland, and the projected union of Moldavia and Wallachia with the Russian Empire were to compensate for the occupation of Spain in favor of King Joseph, as well as for the Italian provinces which were occupied by the French troops. The possession of Finland had for a number of years been greatly coveted by the Russian cabinet, which looked upon it as necessary to the safety of the capital and of the Empire's northern frontier. Hence it spared no sacrifice to obtain possession of it, and to secure for itself the spoils of its most faithful ally during the campaign of 1807, a king, more generous than wise, whose only wrong was to have persevered in a struggle which was beyond his strength, but into which he had been drawn only by his zeal for the common cause.

The Russian cabinet understood perfectly well that stipulations of so odious a nature were to be revealed only at the latest possible moment, but no difficulty was experienced in getting the contracting parties to come to an understanding in this respect. And everything that passed between them with regard to the contingencies likely to arise from a complete partition of Turkey must have been covered with a deep veil of secrecy, for there is no doubt that the subject

was broached. I possess a memorandum drawn up on this subject by order of Napoleon previous to his departure for the Congress, in which all the consequences of so serious an event are carefully enumerated, set forth, and weighed. It clearly proves what I have previously said, that the question had already been taken up at the time of the Tilsit parleys, and that it had again come to the fore at St. Petersburg, in conversations held between Napoleon's ambassador and Alexander's ministers. The conclusion reached after much circumlocution is that nothing must be done in haste, and to rest content with determining upon a plan of partition the execution of which is to be deferred until a more favorable opportunity. This memorandum, which was drawn up by M. d'Hauterive, must certainly have been seen by M. de Talleyrand ere it was submitted to the Emperor.

Nothing was published concerning the result of the conferences but a letter addressed to the King of England by Alexander and Napoleon, to invite him to enter into negotiations liable to bring about that state of peace of which the nations stood in so great a need. Following upon this letter, the ministers of France and of Russia wrote to Mr. Canning, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to notify him that plenipotentiaries had been appointed by their respective sovereigns, and that they were prepared to go to any town on the Continent where those of Great Britain and her allies should be sent. If the idea may be entertained that the Emperor Alexander deceived himself as to the success of this step, it is at any rate beyond doubt that Napoleon anticipated its complete futility. I may state as a fact from everything I have heard say, then and since, by the men closest to him, that his political aims would have been singularly disturbed, had it been otherwise. England was, moreover, as little inclined as he

was to enter upon the paths of peace, and so found it an easy matter to elude the proposition, by asking that the government which acted in Spain, in the name of Ferdinand VII., should be numbered among its allies, and should, as a consequence, be represented by plenipotentiaries. This request promptly brought forth an answer from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in Paris at the time. He declared peremptorily that it was totally inadmissible, the Emperor, his master, having recognized Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain, and having resolved upon never separating his interests from those of his ally Napoleon. In this answer, the Spaniards fighting in the name of Ferdinand VII. were styled insurgents.

The French minister, M. de Champagny, replied in identical terms, and the matter came to an end with a letter of Mr. Canning's declaring that His Britannic Majesty was determined not to desert the cause of the Spanish nation and of the legitimate royalty of Spain, and that hence the pretension to exclude from the negotiations the government existing in the name of Ferdinand VII. rendered their opening impossible. The complement of the stipulations agreed upon at Erfurt by the two Emperors is contained in two documents. The first is an agreement signed by Napoleon and the Emperor of Russia on the 30th of September, 1808, while the second is a letter from the Emperor Alexander to the Emperor Napoleon, dated the 14th of October, 1808.

*Letter from His Majesty the Emperor Alexander to the  
Emperor Napoleon.*

SIRE AND BROTHER, — Deeply sensible as I am to the friendship which Your Majesty does not cease to show towards me on every opportunity, it affords me much satisfaction, in order to furnish a palpable proof of the friendship which I bear towards you, to declare to Your Majesty that I am entirely disinterested in the execution of

the conditional article of the Treaty of Tilsit relating to Hanover (Art. 5), and that I am prepared to endorse everything Your Majesty will decide concerning the kingdom of Etruria and the other Italian States.

I hope Your Majesty will find in this a fresh proof of the feelings I entertain towards you. And I pray God, Sire and Brother, to preserve Your Imperial Majesty in his good and holy keeping.

Of Your Imperial Majesty,  
The affectionate brother,

*Signed: ALEXANDER.*

The contents of these documents do not need commenting upon. They illustrate to what a degree ambitions can come to an understanding when it is a matter of sacrificing what belongs to other people; but, on the other hand, we shall soon learn how far confidence is to be relied upon when granted to deeds conceived and subscribed to in such a spirit.

Let us now inquire into the effectual part enacted by M. de Talleyrand in the actions and final results of the conferences. Such an investigation cannot be devoid of interest. He has himself seen fit to narrate the interview between the two sovereigns with whom he enjoyed such close intercourse at the time. His narration is before me, as I write. Without giving absolute credence to it, it is nevertheless impossible for me not to be struck with the naïveté of certain acknowledgments, concerning which his abandon is all the more complete, from the fact that when he was reducing them to writing, he was placing among his proudest titles to honor, and especially among his claims to the gratitude of the Bourbons, the most extraordinary portion of the revelations he saw fit to make. If, therefore, he is to be believed, he began at Erfurt already to betray the Emperor Napoleon and to enter with the Emperor Alexander into relations which have since borne such important results.



The following is what is alleged to have happened. M. de Talleyrand, entrusted by the Emperor with drawing up, previous to his departure from Paris, the draft of the agreement, submitted this draft to Napoleon, who, in spite of his remonstrances, caused the adding thereto of several measures to the detriment of Austria, whose ruin he was evidently meditating. Upon their arrival at Erfurt, the first days were spent in a round of calls and gaieties, which did not leave any time for attending to business. Napoleon did not wish to enter upon any transaction before feeling sure that the prestige of which he so well knew how to make a display, and from which he derived so much benefit at Tilsit, should begin to produce its effect on the Emperor Alexander. He had notified M. de Talleyrand that he did not wish to have any intermediary between him and his august ally, and that all matters were to be debated and acted upon by the two as between man and man.

This could not be to M. de Talleyrand's taste, as his most ardent desire was to attain personal importance. Chance gave him the opportunity he was seeking. Having gone one day, after Napoleon had retired for the night, to the house of the Princess of Thurn and Taxis, where he intended to spend the rest of the evening, he met there the Emperor Alexander, who had come there with the same intention. This chance meeting was a happy one for both of them; the conversation of the French courtier could not fail to be most agreeable to the Russian sovereign. They soon contracted the habit of meeting of an evening, and this habit lasted as long as the conferences.

M. de Talleyrand had neglected nothing to convince Napoleon of the fact that he was using to his advantage only the facilities afforded to him by so precious a habit. Yet, if one is to add faith to his own narrative, it served him to caution the Emperor Alexander against the proposi-

tions made to him with a view of the abasement and subjection of Austria, whose existence, he would repeatedly point out, was indispensable to the balance of power, which, one way or the other, must be established in Europe.

Things at last reached such a stage,— I am still speaking through M. de Talleyrand,— that when Napoleon handed to Alexander the draft of the agreement which he was asking him to sign, it was M. de Talleyrand who pointed out to him the serious objections to it, and drafted for him the memorandum which he (Alexander) handed to Napoleon, the result of which was to bring the agreement back to the terms previously related. As the price of so extraordinary a service, M. de Talleyrand, on the occasion of his last conversation with the Emperor Alexander, obtained from him the promise not only to agree to a matrimonial union between his nephew Edmond de Périgord and the youngest daughter of the Duchess of Courland, but that he should undertake to bring the matter to a happy issue. He pointed out that one of the advantages of this union would lie in the fact that the Duchess of Courland would become a safe and handy go-between, and above all suspicion, for the secret intercourse which he was desirous of continuing. Thus, on his own admission, he clearly betrayed Napoleon at Erfurt.

But can full reliance be placed on this narrative, and was it not, after the Restoration, so adapted as to give its author the oldest claims to the gratitude of those whose cause he had finally embraced? It is allowable to harbor every kind of suspicion concerning a man whom his conscience never troubled greatly, and the case of M. de Talleyrand priding himself upon an act of treachery which he may, after all, not have committed, if any advantage was to be derived from such a thing being believed, does not present any too extraordinary aspect. Nevertheless, I must concede that

in this instance I am inclined to believe him sincere. In fact, I have no doubt of it, because I was, later on, in a position to see that he entertained with the Emperor Alexander relations dating some time back, on which his behavior in 1814 found a support. In addition to the Duchess of Courland, his constant intermediary with that sovereign was M. de Nesselrode, from the day that the latter was sent to Paris as first secretary of the Russian embassy, under M. de Tolstoi. I am positive that M. de Nesselrode came with a letter accrediting him to M. de Talleyrand in a special fashion.

But it will be asked how it happened that a personage holding such high rank in Napoleon's government should feel so great an interest on behalf of Austria, and why he should have thought himself compelled to take its part so warmly at Erfurt; for it would be too much simplicity to believe that it was owing to his actual anxiety regarding the balance of power in Europe. The following is, if I am not mistaken, the real explanation of this singular conduct.

I have already stated that he wished over and above all to again become necessary, even indispensable, and, with this object in view, it was well that all opposition to plans of invasion and to the ideas of domination which his sovereign nourished regarding Germany should not be conquered. To this must be added the fact that the transactions in which M. de Talleyrand had best succeeded had always been those in which he had been engaged with Austria, that the treaties from which he derived the most fruit for himself were always those concluded with that power, that he owed to them the greater portion of his fortune, for no cabinet knew better than the Viennese one how to make the necessary sacrifices when the time came to do so. From this twofold standpoint, it was therefore necessary that Austria should be kept standing at all costs, even were its existence to lead up to another struggle.

M. de Talleyrand adds, in his narrative of Erfurt, that M. de Vincent was enabled to carry back to his Court the precious assurance that nothing really hurtful to its interests had been concluded between the Emperors. Napoleon's resolve to take M. de Talleyrand with him was a blunder. He had no actual use for him, and it was showing far too great a confidence to a man whose secret discontent he could not be ignorant of, and whose dangerous character was so well known to him.

None of the seductions of a nature to impress favorably those whom it was necessary he should captivate had been neglected. The members of the Comédie-Française had been ordered to Erfurt, where they played alternately comedy and tragedy, and so, for a fortnight, this little town enjoyed French plays nearly every night. Extravagance and magnificence could hardly go beyond this, and so, great was the delight of all those invited to enjoy so unexpected a treat.

Napoleon, when giving his orders to Talma, previous to his departure from Paris, had promised him a parterre full of kings, and it will be seen that he had kept his word. He might have added that never would any parterre show itself so well disposed. Among the actresses forming part of the troupe were several pretty women, and if the Court chroniclers are to be believed, this merit did not pass unnoticed. Nay, it has even been stated that one of them had for some little time engaged the attention of the most eminent one of the personages among those whom Napoleon wished to win over to his side.

Judging from all appearances, the happy result of his efforts in this respect must have been undoubted, and it can well be supposed that the seductions of Erfurt greatly surpassed those of Tilsit. It was at Erfurt that, during the performance of *Œdipe*, the Emperor Alexander, by turning

towards Napoleon, gave so pointed an application of the line:—

*L'amitié d'un grand homme est un présent des dieux.*

On the part of Alexander, this meant not only a complete accord in political ideas, but a worship, and the devotion of the strongest friendship. On his side, Napoleon admirably exercised the art of deriving benefit from such demonstrations. His efforts ever tended towards not abating one jot of his pretensions to superiority, and he attained this object by caressing in a delicate manner the self-love of his powerful and august ally. His efforts in this direction were all the more constant from the fact that this superiority could alone explain and render secure the most astounding and most valuable of his triumphs. On no other occasion, perhaps, did the suppleness and craftiness of his Italian spirit shine to more brilliant advantage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fête given to Napoleon by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar during the Erfurt conferences cannot be passed over, for it characterizes marvellously well the incredible obsequiousness of those on whom the burden of his omnipotence in Germany bore down. This duke conceived the idea of giving him a hunting party on the very battle-field of Jena. The rout of the stags and deer represented that of the Prussians, and the hecatombs of denizens of the forest took the place of those of human victims.



## CHAPTER XIV

The Emperor's return — M. Pasquier entrusted with an investigation between Metz and Mayence — Entry of Marshal Victor's army corps into the latter city — A protest from Jean Bon Saint-André, Prefect of Mayence, and former member of the Committee of Public Safety — Organization of the new nobility of France — The creation of majorats with endowments — Mme. de Montmorency compelled to accept the title of countess against her will — Unopposed re-establishment in France of hereditary distinctions — The members of the *conseil du sceau* — Occupation of Madrid by Napoleon — Retreat of the British army, driven by Marshal Soult — Reasons governing the Emperor's hurried return to Paris — Austria's fresh warlike preparations — Cessation of all hostility between M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché, Minister of Police — Harmony existing between these two individuals in anticipation of Napoleon's likely death — Murat chosen by them as his successor — The discovery of this intrigue communicated to the Emperor by M. de La Valette and Prince Eugène — Napoleon violently harangues M. de Talleyrand in the Throne-room — Temporary falling into disgrace of this diplomat.

WITH a complete feeling of security, did Napoleon return to France in order to place himself at the head of the army which had left Germany, and which was on its way to the banks of the Ebro.

The marching of this army through France gave rise to a succession of ovations of a nature to exalt the minds of the soldiers. One incident in particular tended to convince me that in regard to such enthusiasm, the departments fell in no wise behind the capital. The Emperor, when going to Erfurt, had wished to travel by a new road, which he had ordered opened, for some months previous, between Metz and Mayence. This road had not been completed, as

he expected it would be, and he experienced considerable difficulty in getting past several bad spots. He had, in his haste, not hesitated to believe that the administration was greatly to blame for this state of things, and that it had at the very least shown gross negligence. In consequence of this he ordered the Archchancellor to dispatch at once a *maître des requêtes*, with instructions to go over the whole line of the works, to become thoroughly acquainted as to their condition, and to check every item of the expenditure. The choice having fallen upon me, I was compelled to set forth much against my will, for I was at the time in pretty poor health, and, moreover, busily engaged in learning the exact nature of my duties as *procureur général* to the *sceau des titres*.

But I obeyed with the customary promptness, and, beginning my enquiry in the vicinity of Kaiserslautern, continued it up to the gates of Mayence. I had excellent proof that the road was in a vile state, as my carriage was precipitated down a ravine at least a hundred feet deep. The vehicle was completely wrecked, and I owed my life to the fact that I had stepped out of it just a minute before the accident. But I also became convinced that the administration and the contractors were altogether undeserving of blame, that it was merely a question of insufficient time, and that the only mistake made had been that of allowing the Emperor to take that road, because no one had dared to tell him that it was not yet fit for being opened to traffic.

Anyhow, he had learnt this through the Minister of the Interior and the directors of the *ponts et chaussées* (bridges and roads), even before my journey was over, and so the latter proved a bootless errand; all that it accomplished was to afford me the opportunity of passing through a beautiful country, and of seeing the banks of the Rhine. I met on all sides regiments of all arms, which had just

crossed the river, and in all directions I witnessed the eagerness with which the populations went out to meet them. Triumphant arches, banquets, and balls awaited them everywhere.

Marshal Victor's army corps was among those which were crossing the Rhine into France, and it entered Mayence on the same day as myself. It was known that this corps, the worst disciplined in the army, was not in the slightest degree held in hand by its commander, and it was preceded by stories of the disorderly acts which had been so plentiful during its march through Germany. Its arrival was therefore looked upon with well-founded dread, for, an hour after its entering the town, two men were killed.

I was at the house of the prefect when the news of the murder was brought to him. He was one Jean Bon Saint-André, a former member of the Committee of Public Safety, and who, in the days when that committee flourished, had more than once given proofs of a terrible energy. For several years past at the head of his present *préfecture*, he had drawn special attention to himself by the vigorous zeal with which he protected those whom he governed, and who suffered so cruelly from the continual passing of the military. No sooner did M. Jean Bon learn of the misdeeds of the soldiery, than he wrote to Marshal Victor a letter which he showed to me, and wherein he demanded prompt and exemplary justice. This letter remaining unanswered, he went to the dwelling of the marshal, who was out, or who kept himself secluded. The rest of the morning was spent, with just as little success, in messages and visits to the various barracks. "Do what he may, he is not going to escape me," said the prefect to me, "and you shall see it." And indeed, having followed the marshal into the theatre, he invited me to accompany him right into his box, of which he caused the door to be opened. Then, in the

presence of his staff, he addressed him in very plain terms as follows: "You are not here in the enemy's country; were it even so, the behavior of your soldiers would still be odious, and your weakness in overlooking it would have no excuse. I will this very night dispatch a messenger to the Emperor, and give him an account of what has occurred." The air and tone accompanying these words proved to me that M. Jean Bon preserved a recollection of the part he had enacted as a representative of the people, when with the troops of the Republic. The marshal's attitude resembled greatly that of a general of 1793, when in the presence of one of the proconsuls of those days. He blurted out a few words, promised to see that justice was done, and begged earnestly that the messenger should not be sent. The prefect made no promises, and I am ignorant as to what he did, but I was told next morning that several soldiers had been arrested, and similar occurrences were not heard of again in the department.

On my return to Paris, I took hold of my new duties in the *conseil des sceaux et titres*. It was a somewhat bold conception, this attempt to give to France a new nobility, and to dare set up this nobility in the face of the one, which, although abolished by law, still lived in the memory of all.

The elements were not lacking for the formation of the new tables of nobility. Military glory is of all glories the one which finds most ready acceptance of the titular honors conferred on it, and the winners of battles have in all times easily taken rank in the highest circles of society. They have ever been the founders of the most illustrious families, beginning with the reigning dynasties. But titles are nothing when unaccompanied by wealth, and there is no amount of illustriousness which can resist poverty for any length of time. The faculty of creating "majorats" was greatly ham-

pered by the necessity of conforming to the laws of succession, and, moreover, the number of large fortunes was too limited to allow of this privilege being within the reach of any great number of persons.

The *domaine extraordinaire*, the free disposal of which the Emperor had preserved, and which was composed, besides the domains set aside in the conquered provinces, of monies derived from assessments on the enemy's land, served as a fund for the endowments which the Emperor distributed on so magnificent a scale among all the men whom he wished to reward, in the first place, in his army, from the marshals down to the officers ranking lowest, and also in the different branches of the public administration and the Court.<sup>1</sup> All these endowments, which were made majorats by the *conseil du sceau*, were at the same time coupled with a title, and reverted to the Crown in case of the extinction of the male line of the holder.

The Emperor's idea was not only to create a new nobility, but to fuse it with the old one, and, to that end, he gave to all the bearers of ancient names who had rallied under his government titles other than those which they had borne previous to the Revolution, and, in spite of their repugnance, they were compelled to accept them.

Among those whom this method did not please was Mme. de Montmorency, a lady-in-waiting on the Empress, whose case caused much comment. Yet her request seemed a

<sup>1</sup> There were even endowments, and these deserve special mention, in favor of soldiers who were members of the Legion of Honor and for those who had lost limbs. These endowments, which were naturally of a humbler kind, formed a separate fund, which was administered in common, in order to better insure the obtaining of his due by each beneficiary. I have not enumerated all the sources from which the endowments were derived; I have only pointed out the principal ones. The amounts obtained from the Mont de Milan (pawnbroking establishments), for instance, provided much of the money belonging to the common fund of those who had lost limbs.



modest one. She had been created a countess, and she begged to be allowed to be a baroness only, the latter title being the one she bore in 1789, and which had always been the preferred one of the elder sons of the Montmorency family, jealous as they were of preserving the qualification of *premier baron chrétien*, which had been theirs from time immemorial. Napoleon remained deaf to her repeated entreaties, and making allusion to certain escapades of her youth said to her: "You are not a good enough Christian for me to listen favorably to your claim."

To sum up, in spite of the jarrings inseparable from the beginnings of an institution by which so many various interests were affected, and which could, while satisfying some, hardly fail to offend others, in spite of the ridicule justly attached, it must be confessed, to the manner with which some of the new titles were worn, even among those of the highest rank, the new nobility was not long in securing recognition throughout the country, and it experienced a still lesser difficulty in obtaining such recognition abroad, where it presented itself with the prestige of military glory.

In France, military men especially set great value on this new system of rewards, and showed themselves most keenly alive to its advantages. Several of them, it is true, failed fully to grasp its spirit and meaning, for I have held a good many petitions for promotion in the ranks of the nobility, couched in the same terms as though the petitioners were asking for regimental promotion.

One thing is at any rate certain, and that is that the creation of the new nobility accustomed France once more to hereditary distinctions, and, at the time of the Restoration, this essentially monarchical institution facilitated, in a singular fashion, the reinstatement of the old nobility into its titles. It was a source of satisfaction to be able to insert in the Charter so conciliatory a clause as the following one:

"The old nobility is to reassume its titles, the new nobility is to retain its own."

This happy alliance removed all obstacles, and thus did the omnipotence of Bonaparte once more pave the way in which royalty was to follow, and which it would have experienced some difficulty in opening, if left to its sole endeavors. This important service, rendered at the time of the Restoration by the nobility which was of Napoleon's creation, has not prevented its importance from since being considerably lessened by the cancellation of the endowments, thus depriving it of the advantages of wealth, which more than ever, in the days wherein we live, are indispensable for the keeping up of social distinctions.

It remains only for me to speak of the persons composing the *conseil du sceau*. Its president, M. de Cambacérès, laid all the more stress on all its actions, for the reason that no one was more than himself sensible to the gratifications of vanity, and that, in this respect, everything seemed to him a matter of importance. Three senators and two Councillors of State sat with him. Among these senators was M. Garnier, a former *procureur*, a great partisan of economic doctrines, a man of intellect and worth, but whose ideas had up to then been rather against than in favor of nobiliary institutions. I am convinced that such is the reason for his having been chosen, and that the Emperor's object had been to begin with him the education of those who were refractory. And soon indeed the title of count which was granted to him, sounded most agreeably to his ears.

The second senator was M. de Saint-Martin, a Piedmontese of high birth and very proud of his ancestry, although he was looked upon as somewhat of a revolutionary in his own country. It was necessary that he

should receive an education differing greatly from that of M. Garnier. The third, M. Colchen, was there merely to complete the required number.

M. d'Hauterive, Councillor of State, former Oratorian, a well-trained diplomat, seemed as fit as any one to undertake the new duties which had devolved upon him. He was content with bringing to them a kind of witty naïveté which always enabled him to see the good side of matters, to put the best construction on them, but which did not always allow him to estimate them at their just value.

His colleague, M. Portalis, who was endowed with more positive and much more extended ideas, was, to speak the truth, the only member of the council, who, with its president, was in a position to understand the new institution, and who, while able to notice its weak sides, saw from the very first the benefit to be derived therefrom. He was therefore selected by M. de Cambacérès, together with myself, to draft all the rules which were to govern the actions of the council in its creation of titles and especially in its establishment of majorats. These rules and regulations once laid down, the executive part of the business could be carried on of itself, and offered hardly any serious difficulties.

It became part of our duties to propose the shape and composition of armorial bearings. I speak of this only to illustrate an act of singular pettiness on the part of a man like Napoleon. He would never consent, in accordance with the practice generally in vogue throughout Europe, to escutcheons being surmounted with crowns of various kinds according to the denomination of the title. He seemed to see in the possession and use of this distinguishing mark a usurpation of his rights. His sensitiveness on this point could never be conquered, and we were compelled, in order to find a substitute for the crown, to hit upon the idea of

panaches, the number of plumes of which varied from one to seven, according to the elevation of the title. This did not greatly please the Archchancellor, who thought that a crown would have been the very thing for the panels of his carriage. I was given the title of baron. I had no reason to complain. It had evidently been forgotten that this title belonged to my family previous to the Revolution.

On the 4th of December, Madrid was occupied by French troops commanded by the Emperor himself. In order to advance so rapidly, no less than three pitched battles had to be won. The victories had been complete and weakly contested, although the Spaniards had brought immense masses of men into action, thus affording a positive proof of the part which almost the entire population took in a resistance the end of which did not then seem close at hand. In Catalonia, for instance, it had required all the military ability and all the energies of General Gouvion Saint-Cyr to maintain his position and to get as far as Barcelona. In Aragon, the town of Saragossa was preparing for that memorable defence which lasted over nine months, and which was, after a lapse of more than twenty centuries, to recall those of Numantium and Saguntum.

The British army, which had hastened to the assistance of the Spanish insurrection, soon retreated to Corunna, driven back by Marshal Soult, to whom the Emperor had left the care of compelling it to leave the continent. Napoleon started for France, and was back at the Tuileries as early as the 23d of January, 1809. We are not to see him again on the other side of the Pyrenees, and during five years of battles, Spaniards and French will be left to endure to an equal degree, without his condescending to come to their rescue, all the evils which the twofold curse of civil and of foreign war can entail.

What was the reason which had been powerful enough to

compel him, in January, 1809, to return so hastily to his capital, when so much remained to be done in order to subjugate Spain? In spite of the assurances he had received from Austria at Erfurt, it was impossible for him to remain ignorant any longer of the warlike preparations which this power continued to make with an activity which announced most serious plans. He learnt finally that, yielding to England's instigations, Austria was about to take advantage of his being so far away, to cross its borders, invade Bavaria, carry the war to the banks of the Rhine, and thus effect the liberation of Germany. The opportunity was a magnificent one for attempting such an undertaking. The reduction in the number of the French forces in the German provinces could not be doubted from the fact that the Emperor had been compelled to send the pick of his battalions to the other side of the Pyrenees. And so everything was on the move in Austria, when Napoleon hastened back to cope with the new danger threatening him. This period of his life is one of those when his mind must have been a prey to the most profound perturbation.

Apart from this aggression, he had cause to entertain the gravest suspicions concerning certain intrigues which were being carried on in the very bosom of his government, and which justified the belief that most mischievous intentions were being harbored against him. I have stated what had been the dispositions and the secret doings of M. de Talleyrand during his stay at Erfurt. The part which he had there been permitted to enact, although he had pretended to be satisfied with it, had not given him any great sense of security, for he had been able to perceive that the great influence which had for so long been his over the affairs and the line of conduct of Napoleon, was irrevocably gone.

Hardly had Napoleon crossed the Pyrenees and made a few steps on the road to Madrid, when the bitterness and



discontent of M. de Talleyrand's mind came to the surface. I could no longer have any doubt of this when I saw him on my return from Mayence, at the house where I was in the habit of meeting him. The most sinister predictions were even then escaping from his lips, and he was among those who seemed to believe that the Emperor himself would experience difficulty in avoiding Spanish vengeance. It was then that I heard him for the first time openly censure what had been done at Bayonne. However, he did not at the time go so far, and this is a remarkable fact, as to condemn the invasion of Spain, but merely the manner in which it had been carried out. Said he: "Nothing can be more natural than that we should have driven the Bourbons out of Spain; nothing perhaps was more imperative in order to solidly establish the Napoleonic dynasty. But then, why have recourse to so many ruses, to such deceit, to such treachery? Why not have simply declared a war for which so many reasons could have been found? In such a war, the Spanish nation would have remained neutral to the end. Intoxicated as this nation was at that time with Napoleon's renown, it would have seen, without the least regret, the downfall of a worn-out dynasty, and, after a few fights which would have received a poor support from the regular army, the whole of the Peninsula would have gladly passed under the sceptre of a family which, in France, was already taking the place so gloriously of the family which had given Philip V. to Spain. In this fashion, it would have been an easy matter to acquire the whole inheritance bequeathed by Louis XIV."

This was undoubtedly very plausible language, and it would have been a difficult matter to contest its accuracy; but, for that very reason, it was bound to wound to the quick the man whose conduct was being so severely judged, and by whom? By his former minister, by one of the high

dignitaries of his Empire.<sup>1</sup> Had M. de Talleyrand unbosomed himself merely at the house of Mme. de Ré . . . and in the presence of the few whom he met there, the dangers of such an indiscretion would not have been great, but he was too excited and too trustful to confine the expression of his daily thoughts within the limits of so narrow a circle. He had a large number of acquaintances composed of people of all kinds, many of whom should have inspired him with distrust, and for cause. His thoughts soon became known, and from that time they no longer constituted a mystery in Paris for that crowd of persons who get to know all matters that are whispered from ear to ear. What was thus almost public property in the capital could not but help reaching the Emperor. He was informed of it, even previous to his arrival at Madrid, and he learnt, moreover, very shortly afterwards, of a circum-

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon had all the less cause to expect such a sudden change, from the fact that there was nothing that foreshadowed it in the correspondence then being carried on between M. de Talleyrand and himself, and wherein it was impossible to find the slightest trace of disapproval or even warning. So far from this being the case, I have recently seen (I am still speaking in 1829) a letter from M. de Talleyrand, written on receipt of the news of the fight at Somo-Sierra, and which Napoleon must have received on his arrival at Madrid. In this letter M. de Talleyrand showed himself profuse in his prognostications of success, and expressed no doubts that the effect of the approaching entry of the Emperor into the Spanish capital, following upon so many brilliant victories, would cause all Spaniards to lay down their arms, and that, as a consequence, the establishment of the Napoleonic dynasty on the throne of Spain would become an assured matter. A certain passage in this letter — and it is not the least remarkable one — had reference to certain faults the Emperor had had to find with the *Corps législatif*, and to which he had referred in writing to him. In it M. de Talleyrand strongly doubted whether it would ever be possible to organize in an entirely satisfactory fashion the existence of deliberative assemblies to meet annually. The character of the nation seemed to him incompatible with such an institution, and yet he thought it would be well not to disturb for the present that which existed, with the exception, perhaps, of finding during the course of the year some method of better accommodating it to the spirit and suitableness of a monarchical government. Now, it was merely a dumb *Corps législatif* which M. de Talleyrand considered quite natural for Napoleon to feel himself hampered with.

stance which must have led him to ponder seriously of what might not be plotted in France during his absence.

The estrangement which had persistently and for so long endured between M. de Talleyrand and Fouché, the Minister of Police, had suddenly come to an end. Both men had apparently begun to look at matters from the same standpoint, and losing all confidence in the fortunes of Napoleon, had said to themselves that if he were to disappear from the scene, they alone would be in a position to dispose of the Empire, and that it was consequently necessary that they should determine upon his successor to their mutual and best advantage. But, in order to attain this object, it was necessary to come to a mutual understanding, to unite in the use of their respective means of action, and to forego an enmity for which the time had gone by. They had each met the other half way, and their final reconciliation had been, if I am not mistaken, brought about by M. d'Hauterive, who was at the head of the department of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and who, as an old Oratorian, had always remained on good terms with M. Fouché. M. d'Hauterive had assuredly not seen the bearing of the work to which he was lending his co-operation, and had merely yielded to the impulse, which he could hardly ever resist, of taking a part in everything. He believed he had done wonders in contributing to a peace-making which seemed to him likely to set everybody at ease and be most agreeable to the Emperor.

The most astounding spectacle presented by this unexpected accord was the open way in which two men who should have been so prudent sought to glory in it openly. It must either have been that they believed themselves very powerful in their union, or that they felt pretty well satisfied of the downfall of the Emperor. I can still recall the effect produced at a brilliant evening party given by M. de

Talleyrand, by the appearance of M. Fouché, on the day when he entered his former foe's drawing-room for the first time. No one could believe his eyes, and the wonder was far greater, when the affectation of harmony was carried to the point of the two men linking arms and together walking from room to room during the whole course of the evening. Among those in Paris, who kept an eye open to everything likely to interest Napoleon and who were in constant correspondence with him, was one of his former aids-de-camp, M. de La Valette, to whom he had given the hand of his niece, Mlle. de Beauharnais, and whom he had since appointed Postmaster-General. He was a man of intellect and endowed with a rare sagacity. M. de La Valette felt towards his old general and benefactor the most sincere attachment, and judged of his position all the better that, in spite of his admiration for his talents, he was not blind to his errors.

It so happened that at that time he looked upon the Emperor's situation as a most critical one, and he must consequently have set great importance on what was happening under his eyes, between two men whom he considered capable of anything, one of whom, M. de Talleyrand, had never, in spite of his great reputation, inspired him with either respect or confidence, and the other, M. Fouché, had always been the object of his most pronounced aversion.<sup>1</sup> So he wrote to the

<sup>1</sup> M. de La Valette knew better than any one else the men who had played any part during or after the Directoire. Although a good soldier, Bonaparte had made use of him much more in regard to closet work than in regard to military operations. Concerning the former, he had on several occasions had the fullest trust reposed in him, and especially at the time of the 18th Fructidor, when he had been sent to Paris to watch the course of events, and with orders not to bind his general to anything unless success appeared to him certain, and only in so far as might suit him. He had thus at an early date been in a position to form his own opinion of M. de Talleyrand, for the 18th Fructidor was principally of his making.

The marriage of M. de La Valette with the niece of the Empress

Emperor, telling him all he thought of a friendship which could only have been formed with some political object greatly opposed to his interests, and the fears he gave utterance to were soon confirmed by a fact which threw the most searching light on the mysteries of this intrigue, and clearly revealed its tendency.

I have not had in my own hands the proofs of this fact, but what I gleaned later from the lips of M. de La Valette and of the Duc de Rovigo do not permit my entertaining the least doubt about it. In the event of Napoleon's death, it was necessary to have at hand a man to take his place immediately, whatever course might be determined upon in the future. The two new friends cast eyes upon Murat, who had just been made King of Naples, and whose insane vanity had shown itself but little gratified by so great a preferment, at a time when he was reckoning upon getting the throne of Spain, which he thought himself alone fit to occupy, and to which he considered he had a claim, as a reward for the energy of his conduct at Madrid during the Bayonne conferences. And indeed one cannot forget the rebellion that he had stifled by such terrible methods, which were to play so powerful a part in deciding the uprising of the whole Peninsula.

M. Fouché had always been on most intimate terms with him, and prided himself upon being able to manage him. M. de Talleyrand considered that it would be even easier to overthrow him than to set him up, and he at all events felt sure that his presence would not long trouble him. As to Mme. Murat, the Emperor's sister, her ambition was so boundless that one could make her accept any and all terms.

Josephine had since then attached him, in the Imperial Court, to the party of the Beauharnais family. He was on particularly friendly terms with Eugène de Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy, who was an object of constant jealousy on the part of the Bonaparte family, especially that of Murat and his wife. This jealousy led to serious consequences later on.



She was to give sufficient proof of this hereafter. No hesitancy was felt in letting the new King of Naples know that he was to hold himself in readiness to come to France at the first call, in order to reap the high destinies which were awaiting him. The letter, or the messenger bearing it, was intercepted in Italy by Prince Eugène, who had no doubt been warned by M. de La Valette to be on the lookout, and to watch everything with scrupulous care. The prince did not lose any time in sending to Spain the details of his discovery, and this certainly contributed to hasten the Emperor's return. It was indeed impossible to notice that the rapidity with which he generally covered distances had been much greater than was his wont, and that in spite of the difficulties presented to the traveller. He had been compelled to make several parts of the journey on horseback.

In the first hour of his arrival, everybody thought that his presence was merely due to the condition of affairs in Austria. His fury with regard to the intrigues of M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché did not find vent until five or six days later. He had evidently been desirous of ascertaining for himself the truth of the facts. Moreover, he dissembled with the latter of these individuals, leaving him on one side, and concentrating his attack on the former. It is always difficult to remove the occupant of the Ministry of Police, as the post naturally leaves many wires at the disposal of the man who has held it for any length of time. Hence Napoleon thought that it would be better for him not to remove M. Fouché until such time as every precaution should have been taken to make his resentment a thing no longer to be dreaded. Moreover, he foresaw a coming campaign in Germany, and he did not wish to disorganize any portion of his home administration just as he was on the point of entering upon its prosecution. He doubtless thought that

as soon as he had triumphantly conquered this new peril, nothing would then hinder him from meting out such justice as was advisable.

As to M. de Talleyrand, who had no special functions, and who consequently did not take any active part either in the public services or in the government, he did not hesitate to let him feel the full weight of his anger. The first warning of the impending storm appeared in the *Moniteur* of the 30th, which announced that the post of High Chamberlain had been given to M. de Montesquieu, and that consequently it had been taken away from M. de Talleyrand, who had held it from the time of the first organization of the Imperial Court. In spite of the reason alleged for this change being that since his promotion to the position of Vice-Grand Chancellor, he had exercised the functions of High Chamberlain only provisionally, his disgrace was none the less patent, as so flimsy a pretext did not deceive anybody.

Moreover, it was known almost simultaneously that this action had been preceded by a most violent scene, in the course of which, in the presence of several high officials and of nearly all the ministers, the Emperor had treated M. de Talleyrand as the lowest of men, and had hurled all sorts of reproaches, one may even say insults, at him. I was told this in the course of the evening by Mme. de Rém . . ., who had received from M. de Talleyrand himself the account of all that he had been compelled to endure. This terrible scene was again described to me several years later, and in the same fashion, but much more in detail, by M. Decrès, one of the ministers who had witnessed it, and as it is he whose conduct towards M. de Talleyrand was at the time the most generous, as it was he who did not turn his back upon him, his narrative is worthy of implicit belief. What had more especially struck him, and which he could

not understand, even after so long a period had intervened, was the seeming indifference of the man who had to listen to all this, and who for nearly a whole half-hour endured, without flinching, a torrent of invectives for which there is probably no precedent among men in such high positions and in such a place.<sup>1</sup>

“You are a thief, a coward, a man without honor, you do not believe in God; you have all your life been a traitor to your duties, you have deceived and betrayed everybody; nothing is sacred to you; you would sell your own father. I have loaded you down with gifts, and there is nothing that you would not undertake against me. Thus, for the past ten months, you have been shameless enough, because you supposed, rightly or wrongly, that my affairs in Spain were going astray, to say to all who would listen to you that you always blamed my undertaking there, whereas it was you yourself who first put it into my head, and who persistently urged it. And that man, *that unfortunate* (he was thus designating the Duc d’Enghien), by whom was I advised of the place of his residence? Who drove me to deal cruelly with him? What then are you aiming at? What do you wish for? What do you hope? Do you dare to say? You deserve that I should smash you like a wine-glass. I can do it, but I despise you too much to take the trouble.”

The foregoing is, in an abridged form, the substance of what M. de Talleyrand was compelled to listen to during this mortal half-hour, which must have been a frightful one for him, if one is to judge of it by the suffering felt at it by those present, none of whom ever subsequently referred to it without shuddering at its recollection. And yet, this

<sup>1</sup> The impassibility of M. de Talleyrand on this occasion was generally known at the time, and there was no well-informed person who did not hear it referred to.

man, who was thus ignominiously treated, remained at Court, and preserved his rank in the hierarchy of the highest Imperial dignities. Although in less close connection to the Emperor than heretofore, he did not for that reason become completely a stranger to affairs of state, and we are soon to see him called upon once more to give advice to his sovereign on an occasion of the highest importance.

When thus insulting him, Napoleon must nevertheless have felt that he was making an implacable foe, and hence why is it that he did not completely crush him? Such an inconsistency is only to be explained by his exceeding confidence in his strength and fortunes, and also by his contempt for the creature he was thus trampling under foot, of whom he believed, very shortly afterwards, he could still at his mere caprice make a useful and even docile instrument. It is known, moreover, that it was part of his policy, and this with some show of reason, never to dismiss any of the men who had rendered him great services, who had, early in his career, attached themselves to his fortunes, or who had powerfully contributed to help him to reach the throne.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor had a short time previously given a striking example of the care he exercised in not departing from this line of conduct. Having, during the foregoing month of November, created the *Cour des comptes*, he had, contrary to general expectation, called to preside over it a man who it was believed had fallen into the most complete disfavor. This was M. de Barbé-Marbois. In spite of his many-sided worth, in spite of his austere probity and of his honorable reputation, he had quite innocently rendered the worst of services. While Minister of the Treasury during the Austerlitz campaign, the funds in his hands had been so badly handled, and so madly exposed to the speculations of M. Ouvrard, that the public service had for a moment been on the point of coming to a standstill, and that at a time when the consequences of such a misfortune would have been most serious.

On his return to Paris, the Emperor had been compelled to dismiss his minister. He even did so somewhat roughly, after an investigation of his methods, which revealed the greatest incapacity for carrying out the duties entrusted to him. But, on his return from Sinnamary, M. de Mar-

All these considerations, all these combinations, were later on cruelly foiled; but it must be admitted that it required most serious events and chances which could not be reckoned with beforehand to bring about the complete defection of M. de Talleyrand, and that he showed patience enough to bide his time for a long while, before giving free rein to the feelings of hatred and revenge with which his heart must have been overflowing. The history of his postponement in this respect is almost as curious as that of his final determination, and, calling attention later on to one of the precautionary measures with which he guarded himself till the time came when he was to act, I shall have occasion to show to what a degree it was difficult for him to make up his mind, and how the fright which constantly held possession of him, even then drove him to have an excuse in store, to present in case of need, to the man to whom he was going to give the fatal blow.

I have shown some care in making known an incident which remained a secret, but the consequences of which were great. It is especially by throwing a light on such facts that those who tell of what they have witnessed can render real service to those who, wishing some day to write history in a conscientious fashion, will take the trouble of collecting and comparing the materials scattered through the narratives of contemporaries.

bois had been one of the first of the men in that honorable group of the Directoire's exiles to go over to Napoleon. He had served him unfortunately, but with a rectitude of intention on which no doubt could be cast. He had even at one time enjoyed a somewhat close intimacy with him; for Napoleon, in the first days of the Consulate, had more than once come unattended to spend his evenings at the Treasury building, and it was owing to M. de Marbois's teachings that he had become initiated into the workings of that huge governmental machine. Nothing of all this was forgotten, and the day for remembering it in the most favorable way came, indeed, when last looked for.



## CHAPTER XV

War with Austria—Battle of Essling—Death of Marshal Lannes—The Roman States united to the French Empire—Pius VII.'s bull of excommunication—The Pope carried off by the French authorities—Victory of Wagram—Napoleon's return and sojourn at Fontainebleau—Dissolution of Napoleon's and Josephine's marriage—The last evening spent at Fontainebleau by the discarded Empress—M. Pasquier appointed Councillor of State—Projected marriage between Napoleon and the Grand-Duchess Anne, the Emperor of Russia's sister—Austria's alarm at this projected alliance—Overtures made by the Viennese cabinet, with the object of tendering Napoleon the hand of an archduchess of Austria—Reasons which governed the Emperor in preferring such an alliance—Convocation of an extraordinary Council—Opinions expressed at it by Fouché, Talleyrand, and Cambacérès—Arrival of the future Empress at Compiègne—Celebration of the religious wedding at the Louvre—Napoleon's anger at and reprisals against the cardinals who absented themselves from the ceremony—Grand public fête on the occasion of this union—A dinner given unexpectedly to M. de Metternich, and to the Czar's ambassador—Strange and offensive explanations given to the Court of Russia to justify Napoleon's renunciation of the hand of Alexander's sister.

NAPOLÉON, by his victory at Eckmühl, frustrated all Austria's plans. A noteworthy fact in connection with this battle was that the triumphant army was composed principally of Bavarians and Würtembergers; under his direction, allies were as greatly to be feared as the French themselves. Vienna was occupied, the strongest positions carried, and the Army of Italy, under the orders of Prince Eugène, after having routed the army corps commanded by one of the archdukes, was advancing, in order to join the Grand Army, of which it was to constitute the right wing. So that noth-

ing should be lacking to increase Austria's ill-luck, war was declared against it by Russia, as an answer to its invasion of the grand-duchy of Warsaw.

On the 21st and 22d of the same month was fought the battle of Essling. The engagement began ere the crossing of the river was completely accomplished. The pontoon bridge built across the Danube parted, and the fortunes of the Emperor were in the balance for a while. He lost the pick of his old Guards, whose intrepidity gave the army time to regain the island of Lobau. Among the many brave men who fell in this disastrous encounter, there was one especially, Marshal Lannes, whose loss must have caused Napoleon most poignant grief. His shining valor, his recognized ability, and his faculty of taking in everything at a glance in the thickest of the danger, placed him in the highest rank. No man inspired the soldiers with greater confidence. He was one of those whose place is not to be filled. A companion of the fortunes and glory of Napoleon from the very beginnings of his career, he was also, perhaps, among all those who had risen side by side with him, the man who bore him the most sincere attachment. His loss therefore added considerably to the magnitude of the check. I have it from General Nansouty, that, as he was recrossing with his cavalry division the bridge which united the island of Lobau to the mainland, towards noon of the second day's fighting, he found the Emperor stationed at the head of the bridge, and on his having reported to him the sorry condition of affairs on the field of battle, he could extract no other reply from him than the following one: "What would you have? Rivers have never been crossed except with bridges." These words suffice to show the blame he was laying to himself; but, if he was downcast momentarily, his strength of character soon made him reassert himself, and, just as after the battle of Eylau, he showed a prodigious

firmness of attitude, and great vigor and prudence in his resolves. The audacity shown by him in establishing his camp in the island of Lobau was, if possible, more to be admired than was his wintering on the banks of the Vistula.

The Emperor, by a decree dated from Vienna, united the Roman States to the French Empire. The Pope merely retained the faculty of residing in Rome, receiving an allowance of two millions. It was stated in the preamble to this decree "that the spiritual influence exercised in France by a foreign prince, is in opposition to the independence of the state, derogatory to its honor, and a threat against its safety; that the Emperor is merely recalling the gifts made by Charlemagne, his illustrious predecessor, to the bishops of Rome, and of which they had made a bad use, to the detriment of their spiritual duties and of the interests of the peoples placed under their authority." What a far cry from the day when Pius VII. had come to anoint Napoleon! This spoliation was an odious one. It was indeed strength oppressing feebleness. It was stamped with an ingratitude which gave offence to those most inclined to admire and to approve of everything. It is due to the Council of State to say that it showed its dissatisfaction with the decree in a marked fashion. M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély himself, in spite of his customary hostility to the ecclesiastical power, waxed very wroth concerning a deed which shocked his feelings of equity and moderation.

On the 17th of May, Pius VII. replied with a bull of excommunication to the decree which robbed him of his states. This bull, which, without naming anybody, was directed at one and the same time against the authors, abettors, and accomplices of the usurpation, revealed the indignation which had dictated it, and was little in harmony with the

ideas of the century.<sup>1</sup> Was it indeed wise to let the world hear once more such rash words as the following: "Sovereigns must learn once more that they are, by the law of Jesus Christ, subjects of our throne and of our commands, for we also exercise a sovereignty, but a sovereignty far more noble, unless one pretends that the mind must yield precedence to the flesh, and the things of heaven to those of earth." In spite of this act of imprudence, such a document had still the power to cause great perturbation in the minds of zealous Catholics, as well as in the consciences of those ecclesiastics who had received their new powers at the hands of the Pontiff who was making heard to them the voice of his anger, and who called upon them to support him in his retaliation. The greatest care was taken to prevent the bull penetrating into any portion of France. But, if its entry into France could be stopped, it was difficult to prevent its being circulated throughout Italy, especially in the Roman States, where so many people, and principally the ecclesiastics, engaged in its propagation.

The papal fulmination was therefore quickly known, not only in Rome, but in the surrounding provinces, and even down in the Kingdom of Naples. The ferment it caused, soon assumed an aspect which gave alarm to the new King of Naples, Murat, and to the French authorities entrusted with the administration of the Roman States. The latter, without having received any instructions from the Emperor, forcibly removed the Pope from his palace, and placing him in a carriage under escort of a few gendarmes, carried him

<sup>1</sup> The fact that no name was mentioned in the bull was of great importance, because, in order to make it applicable to any individual person, to the Emperor himself, a new act of the ecclesiastical power became necessary, and such an act could be suspended or stopped by a number of circumstances. It could therefore be said that the thunders of the bull once hurled, Napoleon had incurred excommunication, but that he had so far not been reached by it.

with the utmost rapidity by way of the Alps to Grenoble, where he was set down. One General Radet, who was in command of the gendarmerie, was the principal agent in this expedition. General Miollis was the commander-in-chief of the French troops in Rome. He was a gentle, even a timid man. I have never been able to understand how such an outrage (for it is impossible to give any other name to this violation of the most sacred rights of a man most entitled to reverence) was ever perpetrated under his direction and with his co-operation.

In spite of all that has been told me, and the credibility which seems due to the persons from whom I received my information, I find it very difficult to be convinced that there did not exist some most secret instructions which have not yet seen the light of day, but which time must surely reveal. What strengthens my opinion in this respect is that not only did neither Radet nor Miollis suffer any disgrace, but that Miollis preserved his command to the end. The sole disowning of their conduct is to be deduced from Pius VII.'s rather prompt return to Italy. He was soon made to cross the Alps once more, and Savona was assigned him as a place of residence. It is well known how he was detained there, in spite of a few honors rendered to his person and dignity, in actual captivity, which endured until the day when he was once more taken to France.

The stir caused throughout Europe by so unlooked for an outrage was, happily for Napoleon, weakened by the victory of Wagram. Once more the ability of the general, the vigor of his lieutenants, the precision of the movements, and France's shining valor had triumphed over all obstacles. After two of the most bloody days' fighting of which history preserves the recollection, the Archduke Charles, badly supported by his brother John, who, coming from Hungary at the head of an important division which did not reach the



field of battle until the issue was decided, was driven back to the Bohemian border. Yet, he retreated in good order, and still presented so formidable a front that his conqueror was glad to conclude an armistice with him. It was agreed that negotiations for peace should be opened at once. Peace was not concluded until the 18th of October, and in order to secure it, Austria was forced to give up Trieste and all her possessions on the shores of the Adriatic. In addition to this she had to cede a most valuable piece of territory to Bavaria, to enlarge the grand-duchy of Warsaw at the expense of Galicia, and to give her consent to the continental system.

As the price of her insignificant co-operation, Russia did not blush to accept another 400,000 subjects who were taken from the Polish provinces belonging to Austria. It was a well settled part of Napoleon's policy to get Russia to commit herself more and more in the eyes of the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, and in spite of this astute combination, the object in view was not attained, for the Emperor Alexander soon showed himself more greatly alarmed at the signs he saw of an intention to re-establish the kingdom of Poland, than satisfied with an addition of territory to the grand-duchy of Warsaw. It will later on be seen what a degree of development was reached by this germ of discontent, and the influence it bore on the decisions of the St. Petersburg cabinet.

The Emperor did not return direct to Paris, but went to Fontainebleau, where he remained until the middle of November. To that place flocked in large numbers not only all those whose duties compelled them to pay court, but also all those who were desirous of doing homage to him. As a member of the Council, I could hardly dispense with putting in an appearance at Court, and it was there that I witnessed the beginnings of all the manœuvrings

which were to bring about one of the greatest events of the period, to wit, the dissolution of his marriage with Josephine.

For some time past, the greater number of those about him, and especially the members of his family, had been urging him to repudiate a union which could not give him an heir, and which precluded the idea of his dreaming of certain most advantageous alliances. As early as the time of his consecration as Emperor, the greatest pressure had been put upon him to prevent him from strengthening the bonds uniting him to Josephine, by having her crowned by his side; but all these endeavors had been neutralized by the natural and potent ascendancy of a woman full of charm and grace, who had given herself to him at a time when nothing gave any indication of his high destinies, whose conciliatory spirit had often removed from his path difficulties of a somewhat serious nature, and brought back to him many embittered or hostile minds, who seemed to have been constantly a kind of good genius, entrusted with the care of watching over his destiny and of dispelling the clouds which came to darken its horizon.

In the latter respect, there entered into the attachment Napoleon felt for Josephine a superstitious instinct but too well justified by future events. There occurred, at the time of his coronation, a most extraordinary and generally unknown circumstance, which goes to show how difficult it was for him to oppose the wishes of the clever and seductive companion, who, in spite of so many mutual acts of infidelity, still remained the first of his loves. His marriage to her had been merely a civil one. The Pope insisted that it receive the Church's consecration, as a ceremony of absolute necessity, without which it would be impossible for him to crown the Empress at the same time that he crowned the Emperor. Napoleon refused almost up to the very last to

accede to this request, either for the reason that he considered it as condemning his past life, or that it was repugnant to him to render indissoluble an engagement which policy might some day make it advisable for him to break. Perhaps even he suspected Josephine of having inspired the Pope's demand. However this may be, he was compelled to yield, and I have it as a fact, that on the night preceding the consecration, he was married in his closet by Cardinal Fesch and without witnesses. The Cardinal assured the Pope that this ceremony had taken place. I cannot entertain any doubts regarding these particulars, for I have them from M. Portalis, Junior, whose father, at that time Minister of Public Worship, acted as intermediary in the matter of all negotiations and arrangements with His Holiness.

And yet, five years had gone by since the day of Josephine's triumph, and if on the one hand this lengthy possession of the highest rank seemed likely to greatly confirm her rights to it, on the other hand also, the events which had happened during that period had more than once given birth to doubts and regrets in the mind of the Emperor. For several months past especially, he was more than ever shaken when considering the advantage to be obtained by him through a matrimonial alliance with one of the principal reigning families of Europe. Every political alliance entered into by him so far had become disrupted with terrible ease. Would such be the case with one strengthened by a family bond? Russia, for instance, which had given him such half-hearted assistance in his latest struggle, would it not have given him more active support had he been the husband of a Russian grand-duchess? At a time when he was despoiling the Bourbons of the last of the states over which they held sway, did it not become necessary for him to inspire the other dynasties with some sense of security by showing the stress he set upon uniting

their ancient rights with those which fortune and victory had given him?

The members of his family whom he had seated on thrones, felt to a greater extent than he did himself the need of entering into the great family of kings, among which they were so far mere interlopers, so to speak. All the ministers and high dignitaries shared these views. M. Fouché and M. de Talleyrand came to the fore on this occasion. M. Fouché took upon himself to approach Josephine in the matter, and tried to persuade her to come forward and herself suggest that which was expected of her. He failed in his attempt, and so was disowned, but the first step had been taken.

I was at Fontainebleau on that day, and the fact of such a proposition having been made was soon revealed to me by the state of agitation into which it threw the Court. I also learnt, through my intercourse with several persons attached to the Empress's household, that the scene between her and Napoleon had been an affecting one, and that she still hoped to defeat all the efforts made against her. I did not share in her feeling of security, and, as I had experienced great kindness from her, at the time of the *radiations* (erasures from the lists of proscribed *émigrés*), when I was seeking to obtain the benefit of them for several members of my family, I could not help feeling deeply for her in regard to the sorrows in store for her. I returned to Paris fully convinced that her fate was irrevocably settled, and that M. Fouché would not have taken such a part in the affair, had he not felt certain of giving much satisfaction to the man in whose name he had, in a certain measure, spoken. Indeed, it was not long ere my previsions were realized.

Josephine's opposition was soon conquered, and, as early as the 16th of December, a message was sent to the Senate, announcing to that body the determination which Napoleon

and Josephine had jointly come to, of dissolving their union. The sole reason given was that for the better security and happiness of the Empire, Napoleon should have direct heirs, whom he could no longer expect from his present consort. The cruel duty imposed on Prince Eugène, Josephine's son, deserves passing notice. He was likewise the Emperor's adopted son, nevertheless Napoleon decided that he should join the Senate, and insisted upon his taking his seat for the first time in that body, on the very day when the decision was to occur, which was to make so painful a change in his mother's status. Nay, he was forced to provoke that decision, by adding to the endorsement which it gave to the Emperor's plans, the weight of his personal adhesion and that of his sister, the Queen of Holland, whose consent he guaranteed.

It was an easy matter to obtain from the Senate the *senatus-consultum* which was to pronounce the dissolution of the marriage between Napoleon and Josephine. But this did not end things. The civil bond was doubtless broken, but the religious one still remained in all its strength, and, in view of Napoleon's ulterior plans, it was absolutely necessary that he should be freed from it. The public learnt from the columns of the *Moniteur* of the 14th of January, 1810, that the diocesan authorities, after having heard witnesses, and consequent upon proceedings wherein all the prescribed formalities had been observed, had, by virtue of a decision rendered on the 9th, declared void the spiritual bond uniting H. M. the Emperor Napoleon and H. M. the Empress Josephine, and that this decision had been confirmed by the metropolitan *officialité* (ecclesiastical tribunal) on the 12th. It was learnt subsequently that the ground on which this decision rested was, that the union not having been contracted in the presence of witnesses, or in the presence of the parish priest, was radically null, in conformity with the decrees of the Council of Trent.



The Pope has claimed that it appertained to himself alone to pronounce in the matter of marriages of sovereigns. He had indeed in his favor a famous precedent which did not date so very far back in the history of the French monarchy, in regard to what had been done in the matter of the dissolution of the marriage contracted between Queen Marguerite de Valois and Henry IV. But it has never been possible to adduce any act of the Church establishing the principle that sovereigns are not under the jurisdiction for the judging of their religious acts of the same spiritual tribunals as their own subjects. If several of them have, under similar circumstances, seen fit to appeal to the Sovereign Pontiff, political and not religious considerations have dictated this course, and one cannot deduce therefrom anything against the validity of the common law.

Never, perhaps, was there an occasion when courtiers were more embarrassed as to the countenance they should assume than on the present one. There was no alternative but to signify approval of the master's resolve. The household of the coming Empress would doubtless not be the same as that of the discarded one, so here was a chance for those who coveted positions in the new household. But then, Josephine still occupied a high position. To cease showing her attention was hardly honorable, and the Emperor, who preserved towards her undoubted feelings of affection, might be offended by too great a display of eagerness to forsake her.

I can never forget the evening on which the discarded Empress did the honors of her Court for the last time. It was the day before the official dissolution. A great throng was present, and supper was served, according to custom, in the gallery of Diana, on a number of little tables. Josephine sat at the centre one, and the men went round her, waiting for that particularly graceful nod which she was

in the habit of bestowing on those with whom she was acquainted. I stood at a short distance from her for a few minutes, and I could not help being struck with the perfection of her attitude in the presence of all these people who still did her homage, while knowing full well that it was for the last time; that, in an hour, she would descend from the throne, and leave the palace never to re-enter it. Only women can rise superior to the difficulties of such a situation, but I have my doubts as to whether a second one could have been found to do it with such perfect grace and composure. Napoleon did not show as bold a front as did his victim.

I was appointed Councillor of State on the 8th of February. I have already stated that up to that date few favors had fallen to my lot. I hoped nevertheless to obtain ere long the promotion which I thought I was entitled to. Great was therefore my disappointment, when, on the 6th of February, I read in the *Journal des Débats* that M. Mounier, *auditeur* and one of the Emperor's secretaries, was appointed a *maître des requêtes*, while M. Alexandre de Lameth, the prefect of Turin, was named a Councillor of State. Acting on the impulse of my vexation, I called immediately on the Archchancellor, resolved upon tendering my resignation. He appeased me, and told me that he would call the Emperor's attention to the matter. He thereupon went to the Tuileries, and without of course raising any objection to the appointments of which he had just heard, expressed his sincere regret at not seeing at the same time that of M. Pasquier, whose claims were not inferior to those of M. de Lameth, adding that this omission would be sorely felt by the entire Council.

"And who has told you," replied Napoleon, "that I have created a new Councillor of State?" — "The appointments," rejoined M. de Cambacérès, "are announced in the *Journal*

*des Débats* which I have here." The Emperor thereupon waxed wroth against M. Maret, Secretary of State, who had received orders not to make public these appointments for some days, and indeed there was no mention made of them in the *Moniteur*, but M. Maret had not been able to resist speaking of them to M. Laborie, who had inserted them in his *Journal des Débats*. "Send for the draught of the decree," said Napoleon, and on its being brought to him, he tore it up and flung it into the fire.

The same evening there was a Court gathering, and I attended it. Towards the close of the evening, while standing in company of M. Portalis in one of the doorways, the Emperor passed by us, stopped, and affected to look at me in a mocking fashion, which we were at a loss to explain. On my return home, I received in the middle of the night, the decree appointing me a Councillor of State, and next morning I learnt that M. Malouet had likewise been promoted in a similar fashion. So honorable an association gave me great pleasure. There was never to be any further mention of M. Mounier for the post of *maître des requêtes*, nor of M. de Lameth for that of Councillor of State, and their promotion was completely shelved; the one was still *auditeur*, and the other, *maître des requêtes*, when the Empire ceased to exist.

No sooner had the bonds uniting him to Josephine been severed than the Emperor quickly began to pass in review all the European states wherein he thought it feasible for him to go in quest of a new consort. Saxony and Russia were the only countries which he could hope would listen favorably to his advances; but Saxony, in spite of the antiquity of its reigning family, did not offer the advantages he was seeking. That country was too much under his dependence for its consent to appear as being freely given.

So Russia became at once his objective point, and M. de Caulaincourt, our ambassador at St. Petersburg, was instructed to sue for the hand of the Grand-Duchess Anne, Alexander's sister. This negotiation seemed all the more easy to carry on because, judging from all appearances, the matter had already been slightly touched upon at Erfurt. To this should be added the fact that M. de Caulaincourt was in the best of positions to bring it to a happy issue. He had established himself on the grandest and best footing in Russia, and had, in so doing, marvellously well seconded the views of his master. The Emperor Alexander had conceived a great liking for him. He was therefore listened to with a favor which left no doubt, and which was all the more necessary because from the very outset the proposition met with a determined opposition on the part of the Empress-mother, who, with almost the entire Court and even the entire Imperial family, showed herself but little satisfied with the prospect of such an alliance. Princess Catherine, the eldest sister of the Grand-Duchess Anne, and who enjoyed the greatest intimacy with the Emperor, her brother, with him favored the proposition, which was finally accepted, but only after a series of parleys. Requests were preferred for a certain amount of delay, and it was stipulated that the Princess Anne should be married according to the Greek rite, and should be free to remain a member of the Orthodox Church. She was to have a Greek chapel established for her at the Tuileries, or at least take with her a priest of her religion. The Emperor Alexander cared but little whether the grand-duchess should subsequently embrace the religion of her husband, but he thought it due to the attachment felt by the Russian nation for the Greek form of worship, not to place his sister under the obligation of being compelled to forsake its practices at once. It would hardly have been thought that this precaution on his

part would be the cause of any serious difficulty, still, the parleys which it led to, and the measures required to conquer the opposition of the Empress-mother caused no inconsiderable loss of time at St. Petersburg.

The answer, which was in the shape of a despatch from M. de Caulaincourt, dated January 21st, did not reach Paris till the 5th of February. Now, much had happened in the meanwhile, which had completely changed the aspect of affairs. The Viennese cabinet, following in this the counsels of M. de Metternich, who before the recent war had been Austria's ambassador to France, and casting from it all useless feelings of resentment, and imprudent and impolitic touchiness, had come to see that an alliance between its most formidable enemy and the Russian Imperial family would be one of the greatest misfortunes for the House of Austria; such a mishap might even have so far-reaching an effect as to finally consummate its ruin, and the only way of averting this danger was to offer Napoleon the hand of an archduchess. Such a course was immediately resolved upon, but how was such a proposition to be brought forward? What were the means for securing its ready acceptance? The time was short, and every moment was precious, for it was known that negotiations had already been entered into at St. Petersburg.

A few words hinting at the matter were in the first place spoken at Munich to M. de Narbonne, *aide-de-camp* to the Emperor. This officer had been left behind in order to watch at close range everything that was going on in Austria, after the French army had been withdrawn from it. Matters were not likely to make rapid enough progress by this road. The following is the way in which the subject was finally entered into on both sides. At the *soirée* where Josephine was holding her Court for the last time, the First Secretary of the Austrian Legation found himself by the



side of Senator de Sémonville, with whom he had been well acquainted in Holland a few years before, and whose intimacy with M. Maret was well known.

"Well, this is indeed the end of this one," said M. de Floret to him, "but who is the coming woman? It is reported that a messenger has arrived to-day from M. de Caulaincourt, and that he bears the most favorable answers. If this be true, the consequences of it may be very serious. One may well tremble on seeing so much power and strength about to become united in one hand."—"Nothing can be more true," answered M. de Sémonville; "but, after all, he is acting his part skilfully, he is doing just the very thing he ought to do, he prefers his request to the man who will give him a hearing, and besides, what have you to complain of, you who would not have had anything to do with him?"—"Who says so?" immediately rejoined M. de Floret; "it is quite the contrary."—"You are of course speaking as M. de Floret, and not as the Secretary of the Austrian Legation; it is your personal opinion and not the intentions of your Court that you are confiding to an old friend, feeling sure that he will not take undue advantage of the confidence you have reposed in him."—"You need be in no fear of abusing my confidence. I know whereof I speak, and I am quite sure that I cannot say too much. I am acquainted with the intentions of the Emperor, my master. He and all about him would be highly gratified to see his daughter, the Archduchess Marie-Louise, become your Empress."

The whole of this conversation was repeated to M. Maret before the stroke of midnight, and the Emperor was informed of it next morning. Thereupon M. Maret was ordered to find a suitable intermediary, whose goings on would not arouse too much attention, and who should speak almost officially, but without committing himself to any extent, to the Ambassador of Austria, Prince von Schwar-

zenberg, on the overture which M. de Floret had seen fit to make.

M. Maret selected M. Alexandre de Laborde, who, while an *émigré*, had served with distinction in the Austrian army. He was a frequent visitor at the Austrian embassy and was on good terms with all its personnel. The eagerness with which his very first words were greeted, as soon as he made clear the mission with which he was entrusted, left no doubt as to the facility with which the matter could be concluded, should Napoleon show a desire of entering into it frankly and fully. There remained but for him to finally make up his mind, and there was here food for serious thought. In the beginning, he was swayed by the respective advantages of the two combinations; nevertheless, it would seem that his hesitancy did not endure for any length of time.

No doubt Russia would afford him a stronger alliance, and one of greater weight in the scale of European politics, but his principal object was to become a member of the family of kings; now, in this great family, the House of Russia was but a newcomer compared with that of Austria. By selecting an archduchess, he would unite himself to the oldest sovereign race after that of France. He would be marrying a granddaughter of Maria Theresa, whose daughter Louis XVI. had married. There was no room for doubt that in France so totally unexpected an alliance would strike the public mind to a far greater extent than one with Russia. Hence Napoleon was not long in making a choice.

In order to preserve on so great an occasion all the appearances of having come to a decision after careful deliberation, he deemed it advisable to call together an extraordinary council, to which he summoned the King of Holland, the Viceroy of Italy, Cardinal Fesch, the great dignitaries, the ministers, and the presidents of the Senate and of the *Corps législatif*. The result of this conference

was favorable to the marriage with an archduchess; but it was learnt that opinions had been divided, and that the Archchancellor and M. Fouché had expressed their preference for the union with the Russian grand-duchess. It also leaked out that M. de Talleyrand, who had declared himself in favor of Austria, had played a most prominent part in the debate. The reason for his decision was based principally on the stability of the methods and of the policy of Austria. "This power," he had said, "is the only one in Europe possessing a cabinet whose influence outlasts each and every reign, and which is, as a consequence, in a position to conceive, adopt, and carry out persistently any line of action. Through the proposition which it makes to-day, this cabinet gives proof that it wishes to associate itself with the fortunes of the Imperial dynasty which reigns to-day in France; it recognizes the iniquity and folly of the contrary system which it has followed for the past ten years, and in pursuance of which it has made its last effort. Since it has entered upon such a resolve, it will persist in it, if this resolve meets with the reception to which it seems to me entitled, and the Emperor Napoleon will bequeath to his descendants all the advantages of the union into which he is about to enter. I am fully aware that it will be said in reply to this that Russia is of the same mind, but here lies the difference. In that country, everything depends on the will of a single man; all things come to an end with his reign, and everything assumes a new face with his successor. I will suppose, therefore, that the Emperor Napoleon marries the grand-duchess, and that we are, in a year's time from now, assembled in this room and at the same table; the door is thrown open, the arrival of a messenger is announced, and this messenger brings the news of the death of the Emperor Alexander. As a result of this death, the whole situation undergoes a complete change.

No longer are we sure of a Russian alliance. The influence of Austria, Prussia, and England becomes paramount at St. Petersburg, and all the advantageous results of the marriage are a thing of the past. Let us assume the contrary hypothesis. The Emperor marries an archduchess, when, after a year's time, news comes of the death of the Emperor Francis; it is nothing more than a case of family mourning. The political interests of both countries are bound up together and do not undergo any modification, and the Austrian cabinet continues to be as anxious to preserve intact the alliance as does the French one. This consideration is so potent a one in my estimation that it does not suffer me to hesitate as to the advice which I am now called upon to give."

His advice was followed, and when the decision became known to the people at large, it was welcomed all the more for the reason that what was most desired as a result of the impending marriage, was the finding in it the pledge of a long and firmly established peace. Hence it carried with it the vote of the masses, as it had carried the vote at the Emperor's council. Yet, was there nothing to be set against this blind approval? The following is what happened to me in this respect during the course of the following week. Finding myself alone with the Archchancellor, while waiting for the opening of the meeting of the *conseil du sceau*, I spoke to him about the all-pervading question which had kept all minds in suspense during the foregoing days, and I ventured to express some astonishment with regard to the advice which he was said to have tendered, but which had not prevailed. Cambacérès answered: "The latter circumstance is not a cause for surprise. When a man has only one good reason to advance, and when it is impossible to give utterance to it, it is a very simple matter that he should be beaten."

I had to press him considerably in order to get him to tell me this reason, and he agreed to do so only after I had pledged my honor to keep it a profound secret. "Well, then," he said, "you will see that my reason is so excellent a one that a single sentence will be sufficient to make the full strength of it understood. I am morally certain that ere two years have gone by, we shall be engaged in a war with the power whose daughter the Emperor will not have married. Now, a war with Austria does not give one the slightest anxiety, but I dread a war with Russia, for its consequences are not to be calculated." Subsequent events showed but too well which of these two statesmen had better understood the situation. In the discussion of the marriage, M. de Talleyrand was not and could not possibly be enlightened and guided by as sincere a motive as that which animated M. de Cambacères.

On leaving the council the issue of which I have just told, Napoleon ordered the Prince Eugène to at once enter into negotiations with Prince von Schwarzenberg. The latter was away shooting, but he was sent for, and matters were all but settled the same evening. In order to expedite the affair, it was thought best on both sides to adopt the conditions stipulated in connection with the marriage between Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette. The agreement was signed on the 7th of February by Prince von Schwarzenberg and the Duc de Cadore. There remained only Vienna's ratification. It was not long in coming, and on the 27th of February the Emperor was in a position to communicate to his Senate the terms of his marriage contract. He simultaneously announced that the Prince de Neuchâtel was already on his way to sue for the hand of the Archduchess Marie-Louise, the Emperor of Austria's daughter. As early as the 25th, there appeared in the *Moniteur* the decree appointing the household of the future Empress. The



manner in which this household was formed is worthy of notice, owing to the cleverness with which everybody's feelings were taken into consideration, and the manner in which all the proprieties were observed. The place of Court Chaplain was given to an archbishop who bore the name of Rohan, while a Beauharnais was appointed *chevalier d'honneur*. Among the ladies-in-waiting such names as Mortemart, de Montmorency, de Bouillé, de Vintimille, and de Canisy, were to be found side by side with those of Bassano, de Rovigo, de Duchâtel, and de Lauriston.

Newly created grandees were in this fashion considerably set off by grandees of older date, and even Josephine's household was represented. But, ranking over and above all these ladies was one who had not entered into anybody's calculations, and who had doubtless remained very quiet at a time when so many ambitious people were bestirring themselves to attain the rank of *dame d'honneur* (first lady-in-waiting) which was set apart for her. This lady was the Duchess de Montebello, the widow of Marshal Lannes, killed at the battle of Essling.

Such a selection was the most striking testimony of gratitude which could possibly be given to the memory of one of the bravest and perhaps the most regretted by Napoleon of all the generals which war had mowed down by his side. This appointment was the greatest tribute he could pay his army, and all pretensions were in duty bound to become silent, stilled in the presence of a mark of favor so fully justified. Moreover, it fell to a person of blameless conduct, whose outward appearance would not have been out of place at any Court, and whose manners, in spite of the lowliness of her origin, were stamped by a repose which lacked neither grace nor nobility. She showed herself endowed with the gift of becoming in the highest degree agreeable to her sovereign princess.

The new Empress arrived at Compiègne on the 28th. The Emperor awaited his second consort with no little anxiety. Accustomed as he was to all the favors of fortune, he would have liked that the princess, whom the fickle goddess brought to him, should unite with the advantages of high birth those of an outward appearance at least pleasing. He set little store upon what had been told him in this connection, or even upon the portraits sent him. I have been informed by M. de Laborde, who accompanied the Prince de Neufchâtel to Vienna, and whose return preceded by a short time the arrival of the Empress, that he had been subjected to a somewhat detailed interrogatory in this respect by the Emperor. This is how he summed up the case. "Except for your first look at her, Sire, you will be a well-contented husband." Her face was her weakest point; but her figure was fine, although somewhat stiff. Her personality was attractive, and she had very pretty feet and hands.

The Emperor went out to meet her, joined her at a distance of two leagues from Compiègne, entered her carriage, and returned with her to the palace. They do say that on the very same evening, he acted towards her as Henry IV. had done towards Marie de Médicis at Lyons, and she doubtless experienced all the less difficulty in yielding to his desires, in that this contingency had been foreseen, and that at Vienna, where such matters are well understood, good care had been taken to admonish her that she was to consider herself as duly married. The civil marriage took place at Saint-Cloud on the 1st of April, and the religious ceremony was celebrated next day in one of the great halls of the Louvre, the one adjoining the gallery, and which was converted into a chapel.

We were struck, as the Emperor passed us, by the air of triumph which permeated all his person. His physiognomy, generally grave, was irradiated with happiness and joy.

The ceremony, which was performed by Cardinal Fesch, the Court Chaplain, was of short duration. But, what could equal our astonishment, when we noticed that his face, but a short while ago so radiant, had, on the return from the ceremony, become clouded and threatening! What then could have happened in so short an interval?

Seats of honor had been set apart for the religious ceremony at the Louvre for the cardinals, who from the time that the Pope had been removed to Savona, resided in Paris. The first thing that caught Napoleon's eye, on his entering the chapel, was that some of these seats had remained vacant, thirteen cardinals not having responded to the invitation. No insult could be felt more keenly by him, and it was all the more serious from the fact that it assumed the shape of a sort of protest against his new marriage, and an accusation of illegality.

I must say that his anger in this connection was only too well justified during the course of the year, by a brief which the Pope found a way to send to the Metropolitan Chapter of Florence, and the object of which was to forbid it from granting to M. d'Osmond, Bishop of Nancy, who had been appointed Archbishop of Florence, the power of exercising his functions. In this brief, His Holiness set forth among other grievances he had against the Emperor, the dissolution of his first marriage by the Paris clergy, and pointed out the irregularity of this action, in that it had been accomplished in disregard of the rights of the Holy See. It was difficult for a mind as suspicious as Napoleon's not to see in such an allegation, which was dragged into an affair altogether foreign to the matters with which it was incorporated, a premeditated intention of some day contesting the legitimacy of his offspring, and consequently their right to the throne.

With regard to the cardinals who had declined to be

present at the marriage, they were arrested two days afterwards, and together with an order to leave for various towns in the interior, they were forbidden to don the outward signs of their dignity, and enjoined to be always clothed in black. Their property was sequestered, and the stipend which they had enjoyed up to that date ceased to be paid to them. In lieu of it they were offered two hundred and fifty francs per month, as a dole, which was to be paid to them at their place of exile. Two of them only accepted this offer; the others lived by means of collections taken up secretly on their behalf.

The absence of the cardinals was the only cloud which darkened the magnificent day which saw the accomplishment in all its pomp of Marie-Louise's marriage. The whole of it was taken up with the most brilliant and varied scenes. First came a kind of public presentation of his consort by Napoleon to his people and to his army, by leading her on to the balcony situated in the centre of the château of the Tuileries, where she was greeted simultaneously with the cheers of an immense throng of citizens and with those of the Imperial Guard which marched past at her feet. Then followed an Imperial banquet in the room generally used for theatricals, which was converted into a banqueting hall; next, a concert given in an immense amphitheatre erected between the gardens and the château, and lastly a display of fireworks, the magnificence of which was on a scale with the immensity of the preparations made for it several weeks previous, and which embraced all public buildings, in every section of the city.

I cannot refrain from giving a place amid these imposing scenes to an incident to which chance gave a most piquant character. It was difficult to ascertain where and when the persons who had been present at the wedding ceremony, and who did not wish to miss a single part of the programme,

could dine. M. Regnaud, the president of the Committee of the Interior in the Council of State, had foreseen this difficulty, and, in order to overcome it, had caused a very fair dinner to be brought into the château. He had the tables laid in his committee room, and all the members were invited to partake of it.

We were already at table, when M. de Metternich came by, as he was promenading with several members of the Austrian embassy in an open gallery situated between our room and the garden. He appeared to have resigned himself in a somewhat melancholic fashion to the fact that he was not to get any dinner that day, when M. Regnaud most courteously invited him to join us. He made no difficulty in accepting the invitation, and it thus happened that on so memorable a day we were the only persons to whom it fell to take charge of the foreigner who was most entitled to consideration, to wit, Austria's Prime Minister, the man who, to put it plainly, was henceforth destined to play so important a part on so many occasions. During the whole of the repast, he was in the best of spirits, and, as he was about to rise from the table, he filled his glass, and advancing to a window opening out on the gallery which alone separated us from the concourse of people which filled the garden, drank aloud to the health of the *King of Rome*.

This toast of good omen was welcomed with the most lively and demonstrative exclamations of joy. Almost at this very moment, Prince Kourakine, the Russian ambassador, accompanied by some of his suite, and who also seemed to have renounced all hope of getting any dinner, passed by. The remains of our dinner were hardly fit to be offered to any one; still, they were got together, and, such as they were, we placed them at his disposal. Our previous guests surrendered their seats to our new ones, who hurriedly made the best dinner they could from what had been left by



those whose hunger had been appeased. This somewhat strange scene bore unfortunately a striking analogy to the respective situations of the ambassadors who had in succession partaken of our hospitality.

Two months earlier, the ambassador of Russia, who had just shown himself content to accept the leavings of the ambassador of Austria, took precedence of him everywhere; every honor, every mark of consideration had been his, as being the only ally and real friend of France. A private box in the first rank was reserved to him at all Court entertainments, and every means of pleasing him and showing him attention was exhausted in his favor. How different it was now! The ambassador of Austria, at whom one then looked askance, had become the family ambassador, and enjoyed all the privileges of such a position, and all were eager to render his position more agreeable and more brilliant.

Small consideration had been shown to the justly outraged feelings of the Russian Court. Negotiations had been entered into in other directions, ere its reply had been learnt, and it was two days after the receipt of a favorable one that the preference given to an Austrian archduchess was made public. As it ever happens, the Emperor Napoleon, in order to palliate the wrongs which were on his side, did not hesitate to impute others to the sovereign with whom he was breaking off. The letter which his Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. de Champagny, wrote on the subject to M. de Caulaincourt, affords curious reading now-a-days. The Minister, when informing the ambassador that the extraordinary council which met on the night between the 6th and the 7th, had voted almost unanimously that the Emperor should marry the archduchess, was careful to give the reasons for such a decision being reached, and, among those presented as having caused him to renounce

the hand of the grand-duchess, was the allegation that the Emperor felt offended at the little eagerness shown by Russia, especially when he compared it with that shown by Austria.<sup>1</sup>

"What!" exclaims M. de Champagny, "the Emperor of Russia receives the overture made to him of placing the youngest of his sisters on the greatest throne in the world, by giving her as a husband the man who is the cynosure of the world, the man whom it would be as difficult as it is useless to characterize, and yet repeated delays seem to have been sought, in order to avoid giving an answer! Was not each and every postponement offensive, when it kept in suspense the fulfilling of the expectations of forty millions of men, and the happiness of the chief of the Empire and of the arbiter of Europe? Delays, under such circumstances, may be justly held as worse than a refusal."

As to the deference which it was begged should be paid to the religion of the grand-duchess, it was also dealt with in this letter as raising the most serious questions. M. de Champagny wrote on this point that "the clause having reference to the Greek priest, who was to be allowed to exercise his sacerdotal functions in the very palace of France's sovereign, was to be looked upon as implying an inferiority which was likely to offend the French nation." It is hard to understand how this could be. He even went so far as to characterize as a serious obstacle, the difference existing between the Greek and the Gregorian calendar, and he labored to make it appear that troublesome consequences would arise therefrom. The best reason which could doubtless have been adduced to explain the preference granted to an Austrian over a Russian princess, would have been the youth of the latter. She was only fifteen years of age, and

<sup>1</sup> This comparison is taken from another letter.

had only been marriageable a very short time. The hope of her quickly bearing children was therefore more remote than in the case of the archduchess, who had already attained her eighteenth year.

The ultimate result of thus bringing to an end a matter in which self-love naturally played an important part, was to create a bitter feeling, the principal and probably most fatal consequence of which was that Napoleon, judging the feelings of others by his own, must have been led to suppose that Alexander's mind harbored a resentment which he himself would have experienced more than any other man, and this conviction exercised from that day a great influence on his policy.

## CHAPTER XVI

Suffering endured by Holland consequent upon the continental blockade —

Appointment of a commission of investigation presided over by M. Pasquier — M. de Labouchère sent to London on the secret initiative of King Louis, with the object of bringing about a general peace — A like attempt made by M. Fouché, with M. Ouvrard as agent — Complete failure of these overtures to the British Cabinet — These proceedings, taken unknown to the Emperor, arouse his anger — M. Ouvrard arrested, and M. Fouché sent to Rome as Governor, his place as Minister of Police being taken by the Duc de Rovigo — M. d'Hauterive's report on this intrigue — M. de Labouchère called to Paris by the Emperor — The King of Holland's version of this attempted negotiation — A pen-portrait of Louis Bonaparte — His faults and qualities — Queen Hortense — A conflict of policy between Louis and Napoleon — M. Decazes attached to the cabinet of *Madame mère* — Amsterdam occupied by French troops — King Louis's indignation at this — His abdication and final departure — Holland united to the French Empire — Napoleon's characteristic speech to the son of King Louis — Personal characteristics of the Bonapartes — Lucien, Prince of Canino — Joseph Bonaparte — Jérôme Bonaparte — Napoleon's three sisters: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline — M. Fouché again incurs disgrace — M. de Las Cases and M. Fiévée in the Council of State — Details regarding the appointment of M. Pasquier as Prefect of Police.

HOLLAND had suffered more than any other of the states which had cause to complain of the hardships of the continental blockade. Its expostulations, its desire of being freed from a legislation ruinous to it found vent in popular riots which became daily more difficult to repress. The Emperor, when determining upon a journey through the Belgian and Dutch provinces, in company with the Empress, secretly entertained a wish to judge for himself the state of the public mind, and to see what were the steps necessary

to keep in force measures which he would not renounce. On the 15th of May, he issued an ordinance dated from the château of Laeken, by which he created a commission comprising eight members selected from among the men best informed with regard to the administration and the interests of the country. This commission, over which it fell to my lot to preside, was to meet in Paris.

It was more especially instructed to supply such information as might be required by the ministers, as to measures relating to the establishment of taxes on landed property, the paying off of the debts of cities, the determining of their expenditure and revenues *adjusting Customs' regulations with the requirements of shipping and other interests of the country*, and to all measures likely to do away with all friction between the authorities and the interests while passing from the old to the new system of administration. The commission was free to present any suggestions it should see fit regarding the subject matter, and was to remain in session until the final organization for the year 1811 was decided upon and promulgated. So great a consideration was not what one had been accustomed to, and the reference to the Customs had been inserted with no other object than to calm a feeling of alarm, the strength of which required taking into consideration.

The selection of the members of the commission had been an excellent one. They were all enlightened men and were looked up to in their own country. I took all possible care to assist them in their enquiries, and to give them every information they stood in need of, and I was soon able to observe how much the spirit of the Dutch nation, a nation most industrious, and which seriously applies itself to business matters, is so eminently qualified for it. No useless and troublesome chicanery was to be expected from such intelligent and sincere men. They always went straight to



the fact, endeavored to overcome obstacles, and to devise a mitigation of the evil of which they could not entirely get rid, but they never became angered at the obstacles which they considered could not be surmounted, and strove patiently to make the best of an evidently bad situation.

In those extraordinary times, it was possible, without leaving Paris, to study the characteristics of several nations, and to grasp their varied idiosyncrasies; for, with the exception of England, all European countries having important business to transact or important interests to defend in the capital of the French Empire, took care to send thither their most able men.

The Council of State would of itself have sufficed to enable one to indulge in such a study, for the ever-increasing extent of the Empire daily brought us new colleagues, and there was a great difference between the manners, customs, and trend of ideas of a *bourgeois* of the Hanse Towns and those of a subject of the Pope, of a Roman, or of a Florentine.

The commissioners and myself were constantly engaged during the whole month of June with the work entrusted to us. We had some hopes that a certain benefit would be derived from it, when, in the first days of July, serious events came to interrupt our labors.

More than ever was peace prayed for in France. The obstacle, which above all others prevented this prayer being heard, was England. Was there then no way of conquering its stubbornness? The Emperor could see none other than the most rigorous enforcement of his continental system. Many others there were who thought that cleverly conducted negotiations might convince a cabinet, which had previously given its consent to the Treaty of Amiens, that the present state of affairs was far more serious than that existing in 1802, and that, if there still remained ways

of raising obstacles in Napoleon's path, the undertaking was nevertheless a more difficult and hazardous one than ever. Among those whose thoughts were occupied with this question, and whose opinion was of the greatest weight, were M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché. But M. de Talleyrand had learnt to be prudent, and, if he took a part in the proceedings into which his impetuous colleague entered, nothing to this effect has ever been proven. Both men had a powerful auxiliary in the King of Holland, who was persuaded that it was the intention of his brother to make him, in a very short time, descend from the throne on which he had seated him, and to unite the whole of Holland to his empire. Peace with England could alone avert this unfortunate contingency. King Louis felt sure, and with cause, that the British cabinet had reason to fear above all, that the whole of the Dutch shore-line might pass under the direct sway of France. He therefore determined upon letting England know that such a danger was imminent, and that there was no other way of escaping it except by a speedy and general peace, or at least by sincere overtures for negotiations.

It was in the last days of January, 1810. King Louis, much against his will, was detained in Paris, and more than ever worried by the exigencies of Napoleon. He determined to send to his ministers in Holland an order to select an able and discreet man, one who could safely be depended upon, and to send him at once to London with instructions based on the considerations I have just explained. Their choice fell upon M. de Labouchère, a partner in the firm of Hope, a Frenchman by birth and eminently qualified to well carry out such a mission.

M. de Labouchère went to London, and had a talk with the Marquis of Wellesley, the Minister of Foreign Affairs; but in spite of the favorable dispositions shown him in the

first instance, he was not long in discovering that the British cabinet was in no wise disposed to be the first to deviate from the measures adopted in the struggle of the continental blockade; that, moreover, it did not see any great difference between a formally declared union of Holland to the French Empire, and the state of suzerainty into which it had fallen by passing under the rule of a brother of the Emperor. M. de Labouchère promptly informed those who had despatched him of this sorry result, and shortly afterwards made his way back to Holland.

During the same period, M. Fouché was making a similar attempt, but through a much less happily chosen agent. M. Ouvrard, who was still joining issue with the Emperor, with regard to the suits being pressed against him to recover from him the Treasury funds which he had lost in speculations during the Austerlitz campaign, had just been released from the prison of Sainte-Pélagie, where he had been momentarily confined, pursuant to a decree which declared him to be indebted to the state for several millions. As he was desirous of making a trip to Holland, in order, so he said, to settle his accounts with the banking firm of Hope, he applied to M. Fouché for a passport. The letter granted it on condition that he would undertake negotiations for peace with England. Such is at any rate the story told by M. Ouvrard in his *Memoirs*. But I have reason to believe that he was thrown in M. Fouché's way by M. de Talleyrand, with whom he had for a long time past had dealings in connection with speculations on 'Change. However this may be, M. Ouvrard positively asserts that he merely consented to try and "discover whether the state of mind in England would allow the entertaining of any hope of negotiating a peace." So he left Paris, but did not get any further than one of the Dutch ports, where he met M. de Labouchère, who was returning from England. He

soon learned of the unsuccessful endeavors of this negotiator, whose secrets he in part obtained by entrusting him with his own, and he wisely resolved upon returning to Amsterdam.

M. Fouché had at the time another agent in London. He was an English colonel, a prisoner of war whom he had restored to liberty, on condition that he would serve him. M. Ouvrard does not mention this agent. He merely states that he found a way of entering into a correspondence with the Marquis of Wellesley from Amsterdam, and that the intermediary in this case was, in London, the banking house of Mr. Francis Baring. The documents which reached him from this source were, he goes on to say, at once transmitted to M. Fouché, and, if he is to be believed, it would not have been a difficult matter, according to the tenor of these documents, to reach a basis of negotiation which would not have differed greatly from one resting on the *uti possidetis* formula. It is probable that M. Fouché shared this confidence, for he thereupon proposed to M. de Labouchère to return to London. M. de Labouchère declined, convinced as he was that there was then nothing to do. The Emperor had thereupon reached Belgium, and it was there that he learnt for the first time of the steps which had been taken unknown to him.

The King of Holland, undismayed by the failure of M. de Labouchère's attempts, took advantage of the presence of his brother in Antwerp, and ventured to confide to him what he had undertaken, what was still being done in the matter, and tried by all possible means to convince him that, this door still remaining open, it was to his interest not to allow it to close; that on the contrary, he should take advantage of it to definitely set on foot a negotiation from which the best of results were to be expected.

There is no doubt that King Louis had acted most

thoughtlessly and that he strangely misunderstood Napoleon's character, although he must have been pretty well acquainted with it. However this may be, great was the Emperor's fury as soon as he became aware that anybody had been found audacious enough to interfere in a matter of such paramount importance without any orders from himself, and that none had feared exposing him to seeing rejected with contempt overtures to which it would never be believed he was a total stranger. During the whole of the remainder of his journey, his mind was filled with the painful discovery he had just made and with the care of collecting every fact likely to throw fresh light on it. On reaching Saint-Cloud, he commanded M. Fouché to deliver to him all the documents transmitted by M. Ouvrard, and then handed them over, together with those already in his possession, to M. d'Hauterive, Councillor of State and the custodian of the foreign archives, ordering him to examine them minutely, and to present to him in the shortest possible time a report on the conduct of the persons who had had a share in the intrigue.

Without waiting for this report, he did not hesitate in making M. Fouché feel the full weight of his discontent, on the occasion of the first council held at Saint-Cloud. Among other rebukes with which he overwhelmed him, the one particularly noticed was that he had come to an understanding with M. de Talleyrand towards the carrying out of these guilty manœuvres. Then adding irony to rebuke: "You think yourself very deep," he said, "but in truth you are nothing of the kind; it is Talleyrand who is deep, and on this occasion he has made sport of you as he would of a child. You have been nothing but his tool." M. Fouché did not flinch from taking all the blame upon his shoulders, and declared that he had been solely inspired by his ardent desire to be of use to the Emperor and to his country, and



by the conviction that he could render them the greatest of services. While the council was in session, the Duc de Rovigo, *aide-de-camp* to the Emperor, and in command of the picked corps of gendarmerie, was ordered to arrest M. Ouvrard, who it was known had returned to Paris a few days before. In order to lay hands on him, a proposition was made to Mme. Hamelin, an intriguing woman of easy virtue, with whom both men were intimate, that she should arrange for a meeting at her house, under the pretence of settling the differences which had arisen between General Rapp and his wife, a daughter of M. Vanderberg, a former partner of M. Ouvrard. The latter allowed himself to be thus entrapped, and he had hardly entered Mme. Hamelin's residence, when he was surrounded by gendarmes who conducted him to the Abbaye. On the following day M. de Rovigo was appointed Minister of Police, and M. Fouché, Duc d'Otrante, Governor of Rome.

The Emperor had shown much hesitation concerning the selection of this new minister, and M. de Sémonville had had cause to believe he had the preference. It was even known that having come to Saint-Cloud to dine with M. Maret, who showed activity in pressing his claims to the position, he had, in the expectation of being sworn in before the day was over, brought his senator's uniform with him. But Napoleon's resolutions had changed in the course of the morning. He had sent for the Duc de Rovigo and had announced his appointment to him, at the same time forbidding him to breathe it to anybody. He too dined on that day with the Secretary of State, where he met M. de Sémonville. The same evening it became the unpleasant duty of M. Maret to draw up the decree which ignored his friend, and it was the Duc de Rovigo who was sworn in in his stead. Napoleon had evidently dreaded the sharpness and the wily ways of M. de Sémonville, whom he had learnt

to know of old. He had feared to find in him a minister whom he would, under other circumstances, have to distrust almost as much as M. Fouché, and wanting as he did a man who on all occasions would be nothing but a docile instrument, he had settled upon the *aide-de-camp* of whose fidelity he had had repeated proofs.

When the selection became known, great was everybody's astonishment. The Duc de Rovigo was generally looked upon as ever ready to carry out the wishes of his master on the merest hint, however hard they might be in their results. People whispered that such a master would have needed, on the contrary, to find in the man called upon to render services of such a nature as those demanded of the Minister of Police, dispositions which would incline him to moderation.

M. d'Hauterive was soon ready with the report expected of him. He conclusively established that the measures taken by M. Ouvrard, in pursuance of M. Fouché's orders, revealed the worst form of imprudence, and one which might entail for the man who had been guilty of it the loss of all confidence, might in all justice be looked upon as criminal, in case there should appear the slightest semblance of bad intentions. He declared at the same time that it had been impossible for him to discover such a semblance, adding that nothing had indicated to him, in a way worthy of the slightest belief, that M. de Talleyrand had connived at the matter with the Minister of Police. In coming to such a conclusion, he had evidently spoken merely from the documents submitted to his examination, and had set aside what he knew personally, for I have it from his own lips, that a few days previously he had seen in the hands of M. de Talleyrand one of the documents, which M. Fouché had since been compelled to deliver to the Emperor. The latter was so little pleased with M. d'Hauterive's report, that his discontent broke forth as the latter was reading it to him,

and that he tore the paper from his hands telling him that it was no use continuing, and that he had not understood anything about the matter.

If M. d'Hauterive is to be believed, for I have all these particulars from himself, he showed on this occasion more firmness than usually credited to him. He insisted on being listened to, took back his report, and continued reading it. Finally, Napoleon calmed down, and seeing full well that it would be impossible for him to obtain any more light on the matter, gave vent to his anger against M. Ouvrard, declaring that now that he had him under lock and key he would so keep him for a long while. "This scoundrel," he added, "has already cost me two ministers." The regret thus expressed might be sincere in so far as M. de Marbois was concerned, whom he had been compelled to dismiss for all his unfortunate financial combinations during the Austerlitz campaign,<sup>1</sup> but it could certainly not be so as regards M. Fouché, of whom for over a year past he had wished to rid himself,<sup>2</sup> and against whom he entertained strong feelings of resentment.

<sup>1</sup> M. de Marbois, the Minister of the Treasury during the Austerlitz campaign, had been deceived to such a degree, and knew so little in regard to the state of his affairs, that I have it from his successor, M. Mollien, that the statement of them such as he received it bore the name of M. Ouvrard as indebted to the Treasury for a sum of forty millions. The commission appointed to look into this particular account found that this indebtedness amounted to sixty millions, an amount which M. Ouvrard did not repudiate; but M. Mollien, on having himself looked at the figures and checked them, increased the amount of the debt to over one hundred millions, to one hundred and thirty millions, if I am not mistaken. Nor did M. Ouvrard take exception to this amount.

<sup>2</sup> M. d'Hauterive likewise told me that on leaving the Emperor's closet after that scene, with M. de Champagny, who had been a spectator of it, he could not help saying to him: "Great heavens! What a man your Emperor is! The honor of working with him is pretty dearly bought!" "You are hard to please," replied M. de Champagny, "if you are not satisfied with the way in which things passed off. In our case, the beginnings are often as bad, and it is seldom that matters end so well."

While this investigation was being proceeded with as to M. Ouvrard, the Emperor caused a letter to be written summoning M. de Labouchère to his presence, as he was desirous of having him clear up certain matters of which he alone was cognizant. Moreover, I was told by M. de Labouchère, that the King of Holland, when notifying him of Napoleon's commands, gave him full liberty in regard to obeying them, pointing out to him that a journey to Paris under such circumstances might not be unattended with danger, and that perchance it might end in his being confined in the château of Vincennes, from which he, although king, and in spite of the protection he owed his subjects, would have no power to release him.

It is rather difficult to reconcile this warning with the passage of his Memoirs where King Louis asserts that in February he had opened the negotiation with which M. de Labouchère had been entrusted only by the express commands of Napoleon, who had been desirous of trying this indirect way. M. de Labouchère has told me positively that this allegation was at variance with the truth, and that his trip to England had been undertaken without the Emperor's knowledge. If indeed the assertion of King Louis is accurate, how could he have feared for the safety of the man who had done nothing but execute a plan thus conceived? What opinion then could he hold of his brother, if he could anticipate so odious an outrage?

M. de Labouchère, strong in the knowledge of his innocence, did not allow himself to be intimidated, went to Paris, and immediately upon his arrival called upon M. de Champagny, and had a long talk with this minister, when he held back nothing of what he had been entrusted with and of what he had had occasion to do and say. The Emperor, on his side, on receiving an account of this conversation, recognized that M. de Labouchère in merely exe-

cuting the orders of his sovereign, was completely blameless, and M. de Champagny received orders to treat him with every consideration and even with distinction.

This is the time to state that an ever-growing misunderstanding had gone on between Napoleon and his brother from the moment that the latter had ascended the throne, and it was impossible that it should not sooner or later bring about the most serious consequences. The character of Louis Bonaparte is one of the oddities of the period, and it deserves passing mention. The man possessed, it must be admitted, some estimable qualities. In him were united a sense of rectitude combined with sound morality, but he was mistrustful and extremely touchy, and these elements were increased by the sufferings inherent to a sickly constitution. He had married Josephine's daughter, and the naturally jealous bent of his mind soon led him to conceive the most insulting suspicions concerning his wife, which suspicions were soon justified by the far too easy manners of the woman to whom he was mated. Violent scenes repeatedly occurred between him and Hortense, and, if there was anything which could make him insensible to the misfortune of ascending a throne and attaining a position of which he foresaw all the bitter disadvantages, it was the opportunity afforded him of removing his wife from the far too loose Court of his brother and the hope that he could, when in Holland, compel her to conform to a mode of life more in harmony with his tastes and ideas.

He fared no better with royalty than with the married state, his life being more taken up with its duties than with its pleasures. He became Dutch, devoted himself to his subjects, and defended their interests, heedless as to whether he could do so with any chance of succeeding. Napoleon had sent him to reign at Amsterdam in order to render it sure that Holland would persistently remain obedient to his



will, and that his orders would be obeyed there as implicitly as if the country formed one of his own provinces. King Louis, on the other hand, sought to be an ally of France, but an ally whose interests should be looked upon and reckoned with as having an importance of their own. The two brothers were bound to join issue in a very short while. Napoleon waxed all the more wroth when he saw that his brother made himself daily more agreeable and dearer to the Dutch, whereas he, as a natural consequence, was becoming more and more disliked by them.

The documents relating to this untoward wrangling between the two brothers, and the particulars of it, as told in the Memoirs of the King of Holland, deserve to be read. On being called to Paris towards the end of 1809, the King had yielded only with the greatest repugnance to an invitation which resembled a command. He was fully alive to the unpleasantness in store for him, and to the abuse he would have to endure. His firmness was sorely tried. The negotiation between himself and Napoleon was not a mere diplomatic discussion, it was a family affair, and it assumed all the bitterness inherent to domestic dissensions. *Madame mère* oftentimes interposed between her two sons, and it was in this connection that there appeared on the scene of politics for the first time, a man who since then has often played a brilliant part in it. It was M. Decazes, who, attached to the cabinet of Madame, had more than once been sent by her to Holland to deliver oral messages to the King, and his success in the exercises of his missions had obtained for him the appointment of private secretary to that sovereign. It would appear that he succeeded in making himself useful and agreeable to both parties. In the end, the unfortunate Louis was compelled to subscribe to the treaty which deprived him of a portion of his states, and by which, he bound himself to maintain a French gar-

risson in the part which he was permitted to retain, which garrison was to see that he remained faithful to the engagement he had entered into of preventing all commercial intercourse between Holland and England. Now, it was impossible to carry this out, especially if it was pretended to execute it in all its severity.

King Louis had flattered himself, at any rate so he claims, though one can hardly see why, that extreme measures would be avoided. It turned out to the contrary. The French troops which had entered the kingdom to defend it at the time of the English invasion, not only showed no hurry to evacuate it, but tightened their circle more and more about the capital, which, so to speak, they invested, and into which it was daily expected to see them enter. An army of French coastguards likewise co-operated in this blockade.

The ambassador's place was taken by a simple *chargé d'affaires*. The King of Holland received from his brother a letter in which were the following sentences: "*I will no longer have a Dutch ambassador in Paris. I will not let you send a minister to Austria. Neither will I allow you to dismiss Frenchmen at present in your employ. I do not want any more of your stock phrases. You have satiated me with them for the past three years, and every hour shows me their emptiness. This is the last letter of my life to you.*"

At last, as King Louis, in this, faithful to his engagements, was at Haarlem, busy looking after the preparations, which he was at that time making against England, and the armament of the fleet, which, according to the terms of the treaty just concluded he was bound to equip, he heard of the demand made by the commander of the French troops to occupy Amsterdam. His indignation knew no bounds, and, if he is to be credited, his first impulse was to defend his capital to the last extremity. But when he saw that there

was not the slightest hope of his rash resolve receiving any support, he determined upon abdicating, and of putting his son in his place. He then took his departure during the night of the 1st of July, en route for Austria, and went to take the waters at Töplitz in Bohemia. His behavior on this occasion was, it must be admitted, generous and disinterested. Previous to leaving, he sold a small estate which he owned near Utrecht, and carried away with a sum of 10,000 francs in gold only a few diamonds which were his own. He left, in order to meet the most pressing needs of the regency, the untouched revenues for the month of June. The Queen, his consort, was then in France, at the baths of Plombières. She never went back to him.

Napoleon's mind was soon made up. He sent an *aide-de-camp* to Holland to bring to him the young prince, his nephew, created him Grand-Duke of Berg, and deprived him definitely of the kingdom of Holland, which he added by a decree to the French Empire. Sufficient notice has not been taken of the admonition he addressed to the child when he was brought into his presence at Saint-Cloud, and which the *Moniteur* did not fail to publish: "You are never to forget, in whatever position you may be placed by my policy and the interests of my empire, that your first duty is to me, your next, to France. Every other kind of duties, even those towards the people whom I might entrust to your care, come afterwards." These words, spoken to the son, embodied the explanation of and the commentary on the line of conduct which he had pursued with the father, but they likewise embodied the latter's fullest justification. Louis protested from Töplitz, where he still was, against the act which despoiled his son. Shortly afterwards he personally handed this protest to the Emperor of Austria, saw that it came to the notice of the Emperor of Russia, and finally sent it to the French Senate.

In spite of the vigor and defiance shown by such action, every possible means was resorted to to induce him to re-enter French territory and there take up his abode. The French ambassador in Vienna, M. Otto, who received orders to even give a threatening color to these requests, informed him in writing, and in the Emperor's name, that, as a French prince and a high dignitary of the Empire, he was to return to France at latest by the coming 1st of December, under penalty of being considered as violating the constitution of the Empire, and being dealt with accordingly. M. Decazes was twice sent to him to obtain from him by the use of gentler methods, the submission which his brother so earnestly desired. It was all in vain. He dared threats and remained obdurate to all entreaties. Meanwhile he was reduced to the greatest isolation. The persons who had accompanied him on his departure from Holland left him one after the other; he was ill and alone at Grätz in Styria, when he rejected for the last time the propositions brought to him by M. Decazes. The Bonapartes, it must be admitted, were of no common mould; their good qualities and their defects, their vices and their virtues are not to be measured by the ordinary standards, and bear the stamp of characteristics peculiarly their own. What especially distinguishes them is an obstinacy of will, and an inflexibility of purpose.

The Emperor had four brothers and three sisters. That indomitable stubbornness just referred to had already removed from his controlling power two of his brothers. The one known as Lucien, and afterwards as Prince de Canino, a title given to him by the Pope, had a fiery soul. He was ambitious and greedily fond of money. Public affairs had all the more attraction for him, in that he had played an important part in them on the 18th Brumaire, and he could lay the flattering unction to himself that his

firmness on that day so fraught with peril, had greatly contributed to its success. He deserted the Court at the time his brother reached the summit of grandeur, and when he was in a position to promise the highest destinies to all the members of his family. On his becoming a widower, it was impossible to cause him to renounce his matrimonial views with a *divorcée*, who had been his mistress for some time past, and, sooner than yield, he went into a voluntary exile from which he was not to return until after many trials, which finally led him to England, at the time of the misfortunes of 1815. During his stay in Italy, he seemed to make it a point of honor of showing his loyalty and devotion to the Pontifical Government, whose subject he had become.

Joseph, the eldest of the family, had ascended the throne of Spain after having occupied that of Naples. Witty, voluptuous, effeminate although courageous, nothing in his incredible fortunes was to him a cause for surprise. I heard him, in January, 1814, make the extraordinary claim that if his brother had not interfered with his affairs, after his second entry into Madrid, he would be still governing Spain. This is explained by another striking trait of the character of the Bonapartes. No sooner had they set their feet on the path leading to royal honors, than those most intimate with them were never to see them for a single instant belie the seriousness with which they took the highest positions; they even ended in believing that they had been called to them as a matter of course. They had the instinct of their greatness. Joseph displays, at the very outset of the elevation of his brother, such impatience to see himself in possession of a rank worthy of him, that Napoleon was wont to say laughingly: "I do believe that Joseph is sometimes tempted to think that I have robbed my eldest brother of the inheritance of the King our father."



As regards Jérôme, his brother had, at the time he left college, already made great strides towards omnipotence; consequently, he considered himself born on the steps of the throne. This illusion was sufficient to give him in a large measure the faults which are too often the result of the way in which princes are educated. He had hardly more than the time necessary for him to become notorious by the extraordinary audacity of his fits of debauchery, and he still managed to preserve attached to his fortunes and to his person the princess with whom fate had mated him.

Of the three sisters, the eldest almost reigned in Tuscany under the title of grand-duchess. She made herself beloved there, and this fortunate province owed to her a gentle treatment denied all other countries then united with France. She has left a pleasant memory behind her, in spite of the irregularities of her private life, which she did not take sufficient care to conceal. The Princess Pauline, wife of Prince Borghese, was perhaps the most beautiful woman of her time, and she hardly dreamt of giving prominence to any other advantage than this one. She had been to Santo Domingo with her first husband, General Leclerc. The sun of the tropics had, they do say, been astonished at the ardor of her dissipation. The fatigue consequent upon such an existence shattered her health, and for a long time she was carried about in a litter. In spite of her poor health, she was none the less beautiful.

It remains for me to speak of Caroline, the wife of Murat, and Queen of Naples, who bore a great resemblance to the Emperor. Less beautiful than Pauline, although endowed with more seductive charms, she possessed the art, without being any more scrupulous than her sisters, of showing a greater respect for the proprieties; besides, all her tastes vanished in presence of her ambition. She had found the Naples crown somewhat too small for her head, and greatly

coveted the Spanish one, but in the end she became resigned to her fate, and wore with good grace the one which had fallen to her lot; it may even be said that she did so with no little amount of dignity. She was insane enough to believe that her fortune could withstand the catastrophe which swept away that of Napoleon. In that extraordinary race, the most sacred engagements, the deepest affections went for nothing as soon as political combinations seemed to advise it; nevertheless, each one of its members possessed to the highest degree the family spirit. Caroline took a hand in bringing about the downfall of her brother to whom she owed all her grandeur. It is perhaps she who dealt him the final blow.

There can exist no doubt that the resentment harbored by Napoleon over the negotiations undertaken with England by his brother, the King of Holland, was the principal cause for the breaking off of their intercourse and of the important consequences which this rupture brought in its wake.

The disgrace of M. Fouché had been, at the outset, if not masked, at least toned down by his appointment as Governor of Rome, but it soon assumed a far graver character. The Emperor ordered him to return all private letters written by himself or dictated by him, and which had been sent to him during the time of his two ministries. Fouché refused to obey, or rather alleged that he had burnt them. Such an allegation was not admissible, and the motives governing it were readily understood.

As he had gone to live for a few days on his estate of Pontcarré, near Paris, the Prince de Neufchâtel, M. Réal and M. Dubois were sent there to renew the request and to search for the letters. They returned without obtaining anything from him; their search was also fruitless. Napoleon's anger thereupon rose to the highest pitch, and yet, such was his situation in regard to that man that he was

compelled to confine his vengeance to recalling his appointment as Governor of Rome, and to an order of exile, the place of which was fixed at Aix in Provence, the chief town of his senatorial district.

M. Fouché left at once with his family and with a rather large following; but, changing unexpectedly the objective point of his journey, he continued his road right into Tuscany, in order to place himself under the protection of the grand-duchess, who was under many obligations to him.

In a very short time, this place did not seem to afford him a sufficiently secure asylum, and he resolved upon embarking secretly on a ship that was to carry him to America. In his fright, he left behind him his family and his riches, but his determination was conquered by the qualms of seasickness. He therefore had himself put ashore, and shortly afterwards entered into a negotiation, through the grand-duchess, which resulted in his returning the correspondence he had persisted in declaring he had burnt, and in return for this he obtained a sort of immunity against any enquiry into the acts of his administration. He thereupon considered it safe to return to Aix, where he remained about two years. The determination he finally came to was perhaps the wisest, for he was never troubled thereafter, and, at a critical moment, he saw himself once more called into the cabinet of the man between whom and himself he had sought to place the ocean. We shall find him more than once in our pathway, and his presence will never cease being of ill omen.

During the course of the summer, we were to see two men destined to acquire a certain celebrity join the Council of State; the one was M. Fiévée, and the other, M. de Las Cases, who were appointed *maîtres des requêtes*.

I had, a few years before, on his return from England, known M. de Las Cases. At that time, he was the *émigré*

who held the most rabid views about everything which had any connection with the Revolution. He went so far in this respect, that his friends thought him crazy and considered it their duty to advise him to show some little prudence. Then, as in the future, one could not help giving him credit for the manner in which he had endured poverty abroad, where he had lived by the sweat of his brow, and published an historical work, known as the *Atlas Lesage*. I do not know how his sentiments had of late entered on so different a course, but he joined the Council after a two years' service as Chamberlain.

M. Fiévée, who first became known through some very light literary work, and later, by a confinement in the Temple, which secured to him connections outside France with the party of Louis XVIII., had, on leaving prison, made his peace with Bonaparte. Sent to England upon the Treaty of Amiens, he had, on his return, published letters on that country which must have afforded great pleasure to the man who had defrayed the expenses of his journey, and it was known that from that time a regular correspondence had passed between him and the Emperor, and it was equally well known that this correspondence was pretty well remunerated.

M. Fiévée, not having any independent means, and living as he did by his pen, was liable to be influenced. His entry into the Council produced a somewhat bad effect, and his haughty, not to say arrogant demeanor, contributed much towards turning against him, those who did not view his presence with pleasure. It was said among us that we were about to have in our midst an officious individual who would jot down our every word, who would report it, and that the sense of security, which, in spite of our varied opinions, had always been felt by all of us, owing to the *esprit de corps* which is so natural to men exercising the same functions,

would be a thing of the past. As a result of this impression, and without there being any concerted action in the matter, each one of us was as distant as possible to M. Fiévée, and his position bade fair to be an unpleasant one; but, this did not happen after all, and he had greatly to thank me for it. I possessed concerning him certain information communicated to me by M. de La Valette, the Postmaster-General. M. Fiévée's correspondence with the Emperor passed through his hands, and he had often had the opportunity of taking cognizance of it. He told me that it was not of the nature generally reputed; that, so far from this being the case, it often contained important and boldly expressed truths, and that it was greatly to be desired that many persons should speak to the Emperor in the way M. Fiévée wrote to him. I placed the most implicit confidence in M. de La Valette's veracity, and so, on the strength of his testimony, I did not hesitate to welcome M. Fiévée, to whom I had never spoken, more warmly than did my colleagues.

In those days, I enjoyed no little credit in the Council of State. Free from any of those personal responsibilities which are ever so difficult to bear, I had plenty of work, and that of a kind which was agreeable to me. The subjects taken up by the Council were generally full of attraction for me. During the course of that year, they were of a very important nature. In addition to the laws and decrees I have already mentioned, we had had to prepare the draft of a mining law, which gave rise to important and most instructive discussions; then there was the organizations of the Imperial courts of justice, and lastly, questions which daily arose on various subjects.

I enjoyed as contented an existence as could be. I did not aspire to anything, as I still believed that I was not looked upon favorably by the Emperor, and I formed my



opinion as to this from his having taken from me the place of *procureur général du sceau*. I also came to the conclusion that I would be suffered to remain quietly in the body of the Council, and that I would not be detached from it, to be sent on one of those distant missions, which were then so frequent, and for which I had no liking whatever. It suited me better to retain the honorable position I had reached, and, as I was a member of the Committee of the Interior, if there was anything that I might envy, it would have been the presidency over that committee, when M. Regnaud should give it up through fatigue, or to take possession of a higher position. He had himself on several occasions given me to understand that he did not think there was anybody but myself able to fill his place. I was therefore leading this pleasant existence, when I saw it change in the most unexpected fashion, and one the farthest from my thoughts.

I have already told to what a degree the appointment of the Duc de Rovigo to the Ministry of Police had been badly received, especially in Paris. The position of Prefect of Police was occupied by M. Dubois, who had held it from the first days of the consular régime; he was a man of small intellect; he was not wicked, but had no settled principles as to anything. Absolutism could not have found a more docile and faithful instrument. Occupied exclusively with the idea of retaining his position and of increasing his fortune, he was not very scrupulous as to the choice of the means liable to secure for him this twofold advantage. He had emerged from the law office of a *procureur*, where he had finished his education; his manners and ways were common, not to say vulgar, and in his liaisons was reflected the bad taste which characterized his entire personality. He had recently married the daughter of a chambermaid, with whom he was known to have lived for many years in

a most scandalous intimacy. This marriage had served to increase the discredit in which he was held, and people found it hard to understand how such a man could for so long a time keep a position of such importance. The explanation of it lies in the enmity which existed between him and M. Fouché.

The Emperor, who lived in a constant state of distrust of the latter, found it useful and convenient to keep in close proximity to him, and at a post which afforded easy means of watching his doings, the man who would most enjoy the pleasure of finding him at fault. When M. Fouché was dismissed, M. Dubois doubtless considered this occurrence as fortunate for himself, but it was the cause of his downfall. From the moment that Napoleon found in the Duc de Rovigo a minister whose loyalty was undoubted, the prefect's supervision over that minister became totally useless, and he consequently became all the more struck by the unpleasant features connected with M. Dubois. He was likewise under the impression that his removal from office would give a happy and just satisfaction to the city of Paris, and thus compensate for the fright caused by the appointment of the Duc de Rovigo.

In the midst of all this occurred the fire at a ball given by the Austrian ambassador. The Emperor had been dissatisfied, on this occasion, both with the work of the fire-brigade, and with the absence of the Prefect of Police during the whole of the night. The dismissal of M. Dubois was thereupon resolved upon, but his successor had to be found. Nearly all the members of the Council, whose means and activity would have been able to cope with the difficulties of the position, were already engaged in duties from which it would have been unadvisable to take them. It was requisite to have a man who understood Paris life, and whose name ensured respect with the citizens.

The Emperor was desirous that the new Prefect of Police should prove quite acceptable to the city of Paris. He cast about for a long time, and assuredly his first thoughts did not dwell upon me. I believe that M. Maret, between whom and myself there was nevertheless no intercourse at the time, had something to do with instilling such an idea into his mind. M. de Cambacérès (so at any rate he himself told me) was informed only at the last moment that my name was being mentioned in connection with the post. As for myself, I had not the slightest suspicion of what was taking place.

The Court was at Fontainebleau, and I had gone thither on Sunday, the 14th of October. I was walking in the gallery, awaiting the passing of the Emperor on his way to hear mass, when M. de Sémonville said to me: "You are Prefect of Police!" My first impulse was to laugh at this, but soon I was seized with trembling, on beginning to think that after all it might be true. A moment later, M. de Cambacérès, who went by in the Emperor's suite, notified me that he wished to speak to me after mass, and indeed, in the course of a short talk I had with him, he told me I was about to be summoned to the Emperor's closet, to be sworn in as Prefect of Police. I replied that I could not accept such functions, that they in no wise suited me, and that I should be completely out of place. Whereupon he gave me to understand that to refuse such an appointment would result in arousing with good cause the suspicions of the Emperor as to my lack of zeal for his service, and to my little attachment towards himself. He pointed out to me that if I was not suited for the place, the Emperor would soon find it out, and would make use of me in a way more in conformity with my tastes. He assured me, moreover, that I was not to worry about the kind of service that would be required of me. Everything of a strictly private and

intimate nature, or of a kind which I would not care for, would always be reserved for the Duc de Rovigo.

To end the matter, he pleaded so successfully with me that I entered the Emperor's closet, without having fully made up my mind to refuse the appointment. I intended to decide according to the turn the conversation would take. There have been printed, since the Restoration, several pamphlets the titles of which escape me, asserting that Napoleon, wishing to put me to the test, had asked me, after informing me of the new fate he had in store for me, how I would act in case a prince of the House of Bourbon were discovered in Paris, and whether I would have him arrested, a question which I am alleged to have at once answered by saying that I would do my duty. M. de Las Cases, improving on this story, has given, in the second volume of the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, a somewhat lengthy account of the incident. He not only makes the Emperor ask me if I would cause the arrest of the Comte de Lille, in case he should be discovered in Paris, but if I would find him guilty, were I appointed a member of a commission to try him. According to M. de Las Cases, I am represented as having answered both points in the affirmative, and, moreover, in extraordinary terms! It did not dawn on him that this odious fabrication degraded his hero as much as it insulted me. Never did any allegation have less ground to rest upon, and I absolutely deny the whole story.

Napoleon was alone, when I was shown into his closet, and, to the end, there was no witness to our conversation. Not only did he not subject me to any test, but he did not even say a word that might cause me to think he wished to do so. He himself set my mind at rest with regard to such things as were likely to cause me to feel any qualms. I pointed out to him that being foreign to the men and to the intrigues of the Revolution, I was little fit for functions

which presupposed a thorough knowledge of such antecedents.

Just as M. de Cambacérès had previously told me, he answered that this would concern the Duc de Rovigo, that what he required and expected of me was to once more put the *préfecture de police* on the footing of a *magistrature*, such as it was at the time of Sartines and Lenoir. "You were once in the magistracy yourself," he went on to say, "and it is my reason for selecting you. The man whose place you are about to take has left you much to do in order to reach this consummation, and much besides that must be undone. You are to make a clean sweep of the present police system. I will not refer to the dirty methods of making money, which have disgraced M. Dubois. It would be insulting you to put you on your guard against such methods; but, where the chief has shown so little delicacy, it is fair to assume that his subalterns have fallen into the habit of not letting a chance go by, and you will have to keep a close watch on them. As for the rest, I place full confidence in you, and I am sure you will ever be deserving of such confidence."

It would have been difficult to hold back after listening to words like these, uttered moreover by such a man, and so, an hour later, I took the required oath. Moreover, Napoleon was particularly anxious that it should become known that it was as a *magistrat* that he had made choice of me, and that he had determined upon converting the *préfecture de police* into an actual *magistrature*, for so he told several persons in the course of the day, among others, M. Mollien and M. Daru, who more than once have repeated it to me.







ETIENNE-DENIS BARON PASQUIER

*Councillor of State, Prefect of Police*

1810

## CHAPTER XVII

The new Prefect of Police installed in office — Appointment, the same day, of Cardinal Maury to the archbishopric of Paris — Pen-portrait of this prelate — Constituent elements of the Superior Council of Police — M. Frochet, the Prefect of the Seine — A tour of inspection through the prisons — Two of the prisoners at Bicêtre: M. Desol de Grisolles, a former Chouan, and M. Nervagot, the precursor of false Dauphins — A prison registrar who had kept his place at Saint-Lazare from the days of the Terror — The Emperor's audiences: the *grand lever* and the *petit lever* — Daily reports sent to the Emperor by the Minister and by the Prefect of Police — Obstructions in the streets and boulevards of Paris — The farming out of games of chance — The Emperor's five or six police systems checking each other — The guard exercised by the police over the Tuileries — Measures for the safety of the Emperor — The prying into the secrecy of correspondence.

I WAS now Prefect of Police. This great change in my condition surprised no one more than myself; nay, it did more than surprise me, for it filled me with dread. The most painful thoughts came uppermost in my mind. Still, I received much encouragement, for everybody was glad to see the police taken out of the hands of the man I had succeeded. My ability might justly be put in doubt, but I got full credit for my good intentions, and of the various things liable to reconcile me to my fate, there was nothing I could set greater store upon.

I did not disguise from myself that a few old social links were about to snap. Friends, whose sentiments and opinions I had shared, would not forgive me for entering on so close a footing with an order of things to which they had not given their complete adhesion. There are in the life of a public man few more painful circumstances than those

which bring such changes into his private relations. However, I did not experience too much cause for complaint; for, with but few exceptions, I retained the friendships which were dear to me. It was especially for my wife that I dreaded society's marks of displeasure and disgust. I also felt no little anxiety with regard to the impression likely to be produced on her by this novel situation, so out of the trend of her ideas. Her superior mind soon rose above all secondary considerations. She thought only of all the good she would be in a position to do, and the world, which is not always unjust and ungrateful, soon did her justice and gave her the place to which she was entitled.

I dined with the Minister of Police, the Duc de Rovigo, at the house of the Duc de Bassano. I did not feel drawn towards him, nor did he particularly care for me. During the dinner, we exchanged the first words we had ever spoken to each other. By him I was informed of the Emperor's wish that I should be installed in office without delay. This was to take place on the following day, at six o'clock in the morning. I had to leave for Paris at once. I arrived there at midnight, and at six, I met the Duc de Rovigo at the *préfecture de police*. M. Dubois was told that he must hand over to me all the documents of the office. An hour later he gave me all the keys belonging to the service, and my work began. Men and things were equally unknown to me, and I could not place any reliance on the information supplied to me by my predecessor. He was in a disagreeable mood, and he plainly let me see that he was convinced that I would never succeed in a line of business for which I had so little preliminary training. Nevertheless, I showed him all the courtesy I could reconcile with my duty.

I have always considered that it showed a want of delicacy and a small mind to seek to puff oneself up at the expense of the man whose successor one becomes. It is indeed nec-

essary to find out his mistakes, in order to avoid falling into them, but it is always best to remain silent about them. A few days were sufficient for me to reconnoitre the field, and I soon acquired the happy conviction that the ensemble of the personnel of the office was much better than I had imagined. All the men who had made so sorry a mark during the worst days of the Revolution, had already resigned, and, if it had been possible for me to be ridded of M. Veyrat, the inspector-general, and his son, two of the worst rascals ever met with anywhere, I could have trusted the rest of my staff. I soon learnt that it was useless for me to indulge in such a hope, as this M. Veyrat was a power, and that through his intimacy with Constant, the Emperor's head valet, he was in the daily habit of sending through him a report, the object of which was for purposes of comparison with the one sent by the prefect. I could not flatter myself that the Emperor would abandon for my benefit a mode of surveillance which entered into his habits.

The clerical staff of the *préfecture de police* was good, because its methods sprang from the days of the *lieutenance de police* and from the municipal administration of the city; they had retained the good traditions, and also the old ways. At the time of my arrival, there still remained some of the employés who had served under M. Lenoir, among others, one Henri, a valuable man, who showed great ability and who was at the head of the detective branch. The employés of the *préfecture de police*, differing greatly in this particular from those of the *préfecture* of the Seine, were therefore not of recent creation; hence, great was the difference existing between them in the matter of acquirements, their manner of carrying out their work, and even as regards scrupulous honesty, for the disgraceful goings on during the time of M. Dubois's incumbency must not, generally speaking, be laid to the door of those employed in the offices; they are



almost invariably to be credited to the outdoor service, the greater part of which was under M. Veyrat's control. It is this branch of the service which gave me the most trouble, and in spite of all that I did to improve and purify it, I had not accomplished all I wished to do in that respect, when the time came for me to relinquish my position.

On the day that I was appointed to the *préfecture de police*, Cardinal Maury was appointed Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Fesch having positively refused to take charge of that archdiocese. The new archbishop has created too great a stir for me not to say something about him. He was as happy at his elevation as I was unhappy at mine. I used to meet him in the château of Fontainebleau, and I was on every occasion annoyed by the boisterous expression of his joy.

He would constantly repeat the following sentence to me: "The Emperor has just done justice to the two greatest needs of his capital. With a good police and a good clergy he can always rest assured of the public peace, for an archbishop is also a prefect of police." Such a juxtaposition coming from archiepiscopal lips seemed to me in very bad taste, but the fact is that in spite of his eminent intellect, few men have shown less tact than he, and less of that sentiment of the proprieties which is not to be dispensed with when a man reaches the highest dignities, especially those of the Church. Such as he showed himself in the beginning, such he remained during the whole of the time he occupied the Paris see. It cannot be said that he did not do commendable things. His instructions to his flock especially were nearly always conceived in an excellent spirit. He knew full well what could, in those days, be required from religious sentiment, and he did not seek to obtain from it over and above what it could produce; but his habits were common, nay, vulgar. His athletic build

was of the kind which is only to be found in the lowliest class of the population. His love of hearty living had something vulgar about it, and in private conversation his language was far too free, while his greed for money was carried to a ridiculous degree. This last-named fault, which, from time immemorial, had not been met with in an Archbishop of Paris, could not fail to do him much harm. His faculties had already become very weak. The sermons which he preached, his pastorals wherein praise of the Emperor transcended all limits, and the speech he delivered on being admitted to the Académie française, all recalled to mind the last homilies of the Archbishop of Granada.

The Prefect of Police had the assistance of a council which was composed of the Minister of Police, who presided over it, the Prefect of Police, and two Councillors of State, Messieurs Réal and Pelet de la Lozère, who were especially entrusted with the supervision of the general police of the Empire, which was divided into two districts, these, however, not including Italy, which of itself constituted a third district, the supervision of which belonged to M. Anglès, a *maître des requêtes*, who was a member of the Council of State, also M. Saulnier, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Police. M. Réal was the only one who could be considered in touch with the Revolution.

The Duc de Rovigo knew no other law and rule than his blind devotion to Napoleon, and had little thought for anything that was not connected with military glory. The men who had belonged to deliberative assemblies were the objects of his contempt. He did not like the men of the Revolution, and it was always from among the Royalists that he would willingly have sought recruits for the Imperial service. His marriage with Mlle. de Fodoas, by giving him family connections in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, had greatly added to his natural inclination in this respect.

M. Pelet, who was a Protestant, having, in all the assemblies whereof he had been a member, come out most honorably from very trying situations, was, by character and principle, altogether opposed to rigorous methods. Hence, the district under his charge always remained exempt from those denunciations of people and those grievous scenes which too often rendered miserable the district of his colleague M. Réal.

Italy could congratulate itself upon having fallen under the sway of M. Anglès, who, possessing the same principles as M. Pelet, had, owing to his youth, the advantage over him of not being hampered or restrained by any of the memories of the Revolution. A certain sluggishness of mind, and too nonchalant habits, nevertheless prevented him from doing all the good he intended. The clergy and the Roman nobility have to thank him for many acts of consideration, and, in this respect, he and M. de Tournon, the Prefect of Rome, acted together in thorough harmony.

M. Saulnier, the General Secretary of the Minister of Police, and the last in the hierarchy of the members of the council, had previously been the prefect of a department, on which the gentle ways of his administration had left their mark. A straightforward man not deficient in ability, he was, by nature, opposed to all useless measures of severity.

The police council was wont to meet at least once, and, occasionally, twice a week. Each member of it would give an account of what had occurred in his district. Each and every arrest made by any one of us, had, in order to remain in force, to be approved by the minister, who then assumed the responsibility of it. The Prefect of Police was more frequently in the habit of seeking this approval than any other, as the police of so large a city as Paris necessarily brought with it a number of arrests which were not always

necessarily turned over to the tribunals. This necessity was at that time somewhat embarrassing, owing to the arbitrary power resting with the government. After the Restoration, it became somewhat difficult to reconcile it with the methods of a government which respected legality, and it then fell to me, as Minister of Justice, to make individual rights harmonize with the needs of society in this respect.

The existence of the police council, such as I have described it, was doubtless a useful safeguard against the abuses of authority ever too readily indulged in, when one disposes of a power as formidable as the one entrusted to us; and, with the dispositions animating the greater number of the members of this council, there can be no doubt that they often threw obstacles in the way of useless acts of severity, or mitigated those which it was not in their power to prevent.

I was, to put it plainly, among all the members the one whose actions were freest from control, for the reason that the number of cases which I presented were too numerous for them to be all gone into seriously; but I may do myself the justice of saying that I never failed to draw attention to those which appeared to me to be of a delicate nature.

Among my attributes there was one which did not come within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Police, and in connection with which I was immediately subordinate to and under the orders of the Ministry of the Interior. I have reference to the municipal police proper, in which must be included the lighting up and the cleaning of the city, the provisioning of the markets, the determining of the price of bread, and the duty of making or enforcing a number of regulations that are indispensable in order that the residents of a large city should find all their needs and enjoyments supplied. This portion of my functions, although over-

burdened with details and alone taking up a considerable portion of my time, was nevertheless the one which I most enjoyed, as it afforded me the opportunity of learning and undertaking many useful things, and did not demand the exercise of acts of severity, which are always painful. But I had to show some firmness, for there were many abuses which I had to put an end to. It had been in this quarter especially that the disgraceful dealings had occurred which had sullied the administration of my predecessor.

Another duty which from the outset claimed all the attention I could give it, was the inspection of the jails. I was responsible for their good order and for the security of the prisoners. The *concierges* (door-keepers) and the jailers were under my orders, but, owing to a strange division of authority, all material matters, such as the feeding and clothing of prisoners, and the keeping of the buildings in a proper state of repair, came within the jurisdiction of the Prefect of the Seine. Hence perpetual wranglings, recriminations, and disputes ensued between the two offices, to the detriment not only of the authorities, but also of the prisoners. On entering upon my duties as Prefect of Police, I found that correspondence was being carried on with the Prefect of the Seine in a tone of deplorable bitterness. My earliest care was to put it on a better footing, for I was convinced that a mutual good feeling between two services which are to co-operate towards a common goal, is the first condition necessary to ensure success. M. Frochot, it cannot be denied, was one of the best of men with whom to have any dealings; he promptly responded to my overtures, and we were ever after on the most friendly footing.

In the early days of my incumbency, I resolved upon inspecting the jails. It was a painful task, and made a deep impression on me, especially in the case of my visit to Bicêtre. I discovered there a man whose misfortunes and



force of character moved me too deeply for me not to make mention of him at this juncture. It was M. Desol de Grisolles, who had been arrested as a Chouan, having participated in Georges Cadoudal's plot. It was considered certain that Georges had travelled from the coast to Paris under his guidance, but proof having been lacking either to bring him to trial or to establish his guilt, the Minister of Police, on the suggestion of M. Réal, had sent him to Bicêtre. The selection of this place of detention was, in his case, an act of great injustice. A prisoner of state, he should have been detained in a state prison, and not huddled together with the common herd of criminals. However, M. Réal and M. Demarest pretended to know that nobody had been more determined and eager to assassinate the Emperor, or to have him assassinated, and so they had come to the conclusion that he deserved the treatment of an assassin, who should consider himself only too fortunate in being allowed to live. This idea had so completely taken hold of the minds of the Emperor, M. Fouché, and the Duc de Rovigo, that in spite of all I could say and do for three and a half years, it was impossible for me to obtain his transfer to Vincennes, whither he persistently begged to be sent.

The first time I saw him, he was confined in a cell on the ground-floor, and this was at his formal request, not wishing, as he said, to live and be herded with the scoundrels of which the jail was full. The place was a damp one, and, as a result, his eyes were in a frightful state. I pointed out to him that he might lose his eyesight, if he continued to remain in so wretched an habitation, and I offered to send him to the infirmary, where he could be treated for his eyes. "No," he replied, "I should meet there the same scoundrels. I beg you will have me transferred to some other jail. It is the only favor I ask. I

will not accept any other." I gave him to understand that this was beyond my power, as he was not detained in custody by my orders. For still another year, he persisted in remaining in that unhealthy place, and it was only at the end of that time that I succeeded in prevailing upon him to move into a little room at the end of a corridor, at the top of the building. When the other prisoners had been locked up in their cells, he was allowed, in conformity with my orders, to stroll about the corridor. The Restoration alone gave him his freedom. During the Hundred Days, he commanded a body of Royalists in the Morbihan, when he attracted notice by a moderation which was more commendable in him than in anybody else. He was in the end appointed Governor of the Castle of Pau, where he at last found some little rest.<sup>1</sup>

This Bicêtre jail contained another most extraordinary individual; he, however, did not inspire me with any feelings of compassion. He was a young man, the son of a tailor in some little town or other in Normandy. His name was Nervagot, and he had conceived the idea of posing as the Dauphin, the son of Louis XVI. He had, he said, escaped from the Temple, and for a long time remained hidden in Brittany. As the Dauphin, he had wandered through Poitou and Anjou, where he had made many dupes. No doubt could be entertained as to his origin, for his father had come and identified him; this, however, did not prevent him from persisting in his falsehood, which he maintained with effrontery to my very face. He died at Bicêtre, and was thus, it will be seen, the precursor of that other false Dauphin, whose claims were quickly disposed of by the courts of Rouen, in 1818. This latter one succeeded

<sup>1</sup> The Revolution of July deprived him of this asylum, and he took refuge at Bordeaux. I do not know what his means of existence are in that place, but I think he lives in very poor circumstances.

in imposing upon those who should have been most on their guard against so gross an imposture; but the human mind is so constituted, that it revels in the marvellous, and readily accepts the most absurd things, when lacking anything better.

During my inspection of Saint-Lazare, a house of detention for females on whom sentence has been passed, and which boasted of some very fine workshops, I was followed everywhere, in addition to the *conciergerie*, by a little man who filled the position of *greffier* (registrar), and who seemed to be able to answer every question I could put to him. He remained all the time close to me, and seemed desirous of attracting my attention. I was about to leave, when, no longer able to control himself, he addressed me as follows: "Monsieur le préfet does not seem to know me again, and yet it was I who had the honor of welcoming him here in 1794." I had, it will be recalled, been an inmate of Saint-Lazare, into which the Terror thrust so many of its victims, at that time, and I was one of those doomed to a certain death. Robespierre's death had alone saved me. It was doubtless an irony of fate which brought me back, clothed with so great an authority, to the place where I had been so cruelly oppressed, and this little man, who had, while at the same post, passed through such varying times and régimes, and was almost proud of it, who, to call attention to himself, feared not to mention the position of trust he had held during the Terror, what was he, after all, but a faithful servant, having never seen in his occupation anything than a duty, and having never had any care but to faithfully do the work which gave him his daily bread? Hence, is it not wrong to ask of the common run of mortals any other merit than this?

It was impossible not to notice, if one had cast no more than a glance into the prisons of Paris prior to the Revolu-

tion,<sup>1</sup> that there had since then been a remarkable improvement in their condition, especially in connection with sanitary matters. But how much there still remained to do! And, how much more, by the way, had the condition of affairs in the hospitals progressed in comparison with that of jails! To what causes could this difference be attributed, if not to the fact that the hospitals are subject to a voluntary and altogether beneficent management, solely inspired by the desire of doing good? Would it then be impossible to extend to the jails the benefit of this charitable and voluntary administration? I do not think so. The need of measures of safety which must be rigorously adhered to in their case would not allow the leaving to an administration of such a kind the latitude of power granted to it in the matter of hospitals; but it would be an easy matter to take a leaf out of its book, and even such a concession would still play a most important part.

After the prisons, I had to visit the hospitals. They were not under my immediate supervision, but yet my branch of the service had with them certain regular points of contact and bore certain relations to them, which made it necessary that I should become well acquainted with their management. Moreover, I was, as Prefect of Police, a member of the general Hospital Board, and I was desirous of taking my seat at this Board as often as I could with convenience to myself do so.

My predecessor in office had never attended it, because he would have been presided over by the Prefect of the Seine, a thing he considered beneath his dignity. I set aside this point of etiquette, which seemed to me all the

<sup>1</sup> The Parlement of Paris every year sent three of its members to inspect the prisons and to receive any complaints that the prisoners might have to make. In 1788 I had accompanied my father during this visit. It was not done in a thorough fashion, but it sufficed for me never to lose the memory of the melancholy spectacle which then afflicted my sight.

more out of place in that the issue at stake was a work of charity in which I found myself associated with men of the highest respectability. They showed themselves much gratified by the eagerness I displayed to co-operate with them in their efforts to do some good, a thing which they really accomplished, for, owing to their care, the hospitals of Paris are doubtless in a better condition than all those of which one has any knowledge in Europe.

The part which I was able to take in their labors, and the services which I was placed in a position to render them, contributed greatly towards the good feeling which I was fortunate enough to obtain, and of which the bourgeoisie of Paris has given me proofs on more than one occasion. This class, if I may be permitted to make passing mention of it, is one of the most worthy of respect that is to be found in any capital city. I have always found it a friend of order, very conscientious, and prepared to endure every sacrifice which public welfare requires. Its morals are, generally speaking, good. One thing in particular has always been a cause of surprise to me, and this is the absolute chastity of a number of young girls who live and sometimes grow up in close proximity to dens of infamy.

The Duc de Rovigo had not been greatly pleased at my appointment. It was not long ere I was to receive numerous proofs of his malevolent sentiments towards me. I was in daily receipt of memoranda issuing from his closet, which ever contained warnings or complaints about what was being done in my office. He was in the habit of lending an ear to these complaints, encouraged them, and took upon himself to interfere in everything, and to exercise a control over everything. Feeling strong in the little amount of confidence with which M. Dubois had inspired the Emperor, he had taken advantage of it to secure unto himself



the right of appointment to all important positions in the outdoor service of the *préfecture*. These officials, no longer holding their positions from the chief to whom they owed obedience, showed as a matter of course less deference to him. I was fully determined not to allow him this claim, and I would have tendered my resignation, had not the Duc de Rovigo himself, through a fortunate combination of circumstances, been brought to see that this right of making appointments ought to be limited, in so far as he was concerned, to a mere matter of form, and that my recommendations, barring a few instances which could be foreseen with difficulty, were always to be acted on. The Duc de Rovigo was surrounded by a crowd of flatterers of small estate. It was an easy matter to turn the head of a minister who, although of an intelligent nature, was completely without education. He was in the habit of welcoming to his breakfast table the editors of a few journals which he liberally subsidized. It was at these breakfasts that were generally started the number of complaints without basis or measure with which I was worried. Once or twice I was present. The eagerness to invite me had been all the greater in that it would have given great pleasure to have me commit myself out of my own mouth, and thus entrap me. This reunion so inspired me with disgust, that in order to remain absent from it, I quickly alleged the but too well grounded excuse of my numerous occupations.

My most dangerous enemy in that evilly disposed circle was invariably M. Demarest. He seemed to have set himself particularly the task of watching me, of playing the spy on me, and of finding me in fault. His reports were of a nature to increase the Duc de Rovigo's prejudices against me. Fortunately for me, I had on my side M. Maret, Duc de Bassano, who always did me justice. He had, as I have already stated, contributed in a certain degree to my being

appointed. I went to see him immediately on his return to Fontainebleau, and he invited me to call on him frequently. He did not like the Duc de Rovigo, who was at that time rather in bad odor with his colleagues. He entertained a poor opinion of his ability, and he was, moreover, anxious that this newcomer into the ministry should not make too rapid steps in the master's confidence, a confidence which he would have liked to be the only one to enjoy. His wife, who had a great influence over his mind, detested the Duchesse de Rovigo. Thus, everything was in my favor in that quarter.

M. de Sémonville, my former friend in the Parlement, and M. Maret's close friend, also helped to well establish me in his mind, and I soon came to be on such a footing that I spent most of my evenings, from ten o'clock to midnight, at the Ministry of State; I would sometimes remain there till one o'clock in the morning. While there, I always had an opportunity, while chatting and playing billiards with the Minister, of telling him what I thought it well that the Emperor should know, and that which seemed to me most likely to baffle the worries to which I was subjected.

I was also in the habit of asking advice of the Archchancellor on every occasion when he would permit me to do so, for his prudence had caused him to recommend my showing great reserve in this respect. This fact is characteristic of the fears for their position from which the men who occupied the highest posts under Napoleon were not exempt. The first time that I saw M. de Cambacérès, after being installed in the *préfecture de police*, he hastened to let me know that I must henceforth see less of him than in the past. "It would not be proper for me," he said to me, "liable as I am to be in possession of most important secrets which must remain confined to the Emperor and

myself, to preserve too intimate an intercourse with anybody, as this intercourse would naturally inspire fears as to my discretion." The danger was never a great one, because most fortunately what he had himself told me at Fontainebleau, was constantly realized, Napoleon's confidence in me never having led him to submit me to dangerous and difficult ordeals. Nevertheless, as Prefect of Police, I was admitted every time I presented myself at the audience which he was wont to give after rising, and there I met those persons who enjoyed his intimacy to the greatest extent. These were the marshals, the generals commanding the Imperial Guard, men who had just returned from some important mission, or others who came to receive his final orders previous to assuming some important command.

Preceding this audience, which was known as the *grand lever*, there was the *petit lever*, to which were admitted only the servants of the bedchamber, and the household service, at the head of which was the grand marshal of the palace, Duroc. The Abbé de Pradt, Archbishop of Mechlin, had, as chaplain, the right to attend the *petit lever*, and he frequently availed himself of his privilege. We were always made aware of his presence by the length of his conversations with the Emperor, for it was with him that the Emperor was more frequently in the habit of discussing the affairs of the clergy.

The gatherings at the *grand lever* were often most interesting. The merest words of the master were seized upon with avidity. It was seldom that he did not speak to everybody, addressing to each one some question which had reference to his functions. Generally speaking, his satisfaction was reflected in his looks and by a certain affability of manner, rather than expressed by words. His discontent would find vent in dry, not to say harsh, remarks. When one required to tell him something necessitating an inter-

view with him in private, it was the custom to beg the favor of him through the gentleman-in-waiting who was on duty, and he seldom refused it. I availed myself but little of this favor, and never, I believe, during the first year of my incumbency.

The few words which in those days passed between Napoleon and myself were limited to questions as to certain details of my service, which questions I well knew must be answered in an exact fashion. As an instance, he was fond of asking me: "How many boats carrying wine are now on the river? How many bags of wheat are there in the grain market," etc.? And I always had to give him the exact figures, as mere guess work would never have been to his taste. It so happened that my memory was precisely of the kind less qualified to give him such satisfaction, and the difficulty I experienced in giving him exact answers led me to make out a little note-book which I generally carried with me, and which contained the principal and most interesting statistics of my service. I showed this note-book to the Ministers of the Interior and of the Police, and to the Prefect of the Department of the Seine. All of them were struck with its usefulness. The Prefect resolved upon doing the same with regard to his service, and such was the origin of the statistics of the Department of the Seine, a work brought to so high a state of perfection by M. Chabrol, and which is to-day a standard for all men who study political economy

It was customary for the Prefect of Police to send every evening to the Emperor a memorandum of the events which had occurred during the day and which were worthy of some attention, such as the number of arrests made, and for what causes during the past twenty-four hours, and the amount of provisions in the markets. The Prefect was free to send under the same cover any comments which he

saw fit to submit to him, and it was, according to the circumstance, a potent way of influencing his mind. My predecessor had frequently had recourse to this method, but I made use of it only on very rare occasions, being quite content to abandon such a way of increasing one's importance to the Minister of Police, who, like myself, used to send in his report every night. As a result of the care I took of thus confining myself in the most narrow circle of my attributes, I never was taken into the intimate confidence of the Emperor, and especially on familiar terms with him. He never granted me any of the marked favors which he lavishly showered upon the men whom he believed to belong soul and body to him. But, on the other hand, I never had to endure from him any of those rebuffs, nor any of those disagreeable words from which he did not spare any of them. I always kept my place, and, if his esteem, which I think I won, did not procure any great advantage for me, it ever sheltered me from his outbursts of harsh words.

I had hardly entered upon my new duties, when I was submitted to a somewhat severe test as regards the activity they called for. I was to enforce, at the earliest moment, the execution of a decree which ordered the clearing of the streets, the open spaces, and the boulevards of Paris, of the building materials which obstructed them, and lay in every direction, consequent upon the erection of buildings of all kinds which were being put up from one end of the capital to the other. This encumbrance had reached a point which could no longer be tolerated, and had afforded the opportunity of a rather piquant answer from the King of Würtemberg, who, on being asked by the Emperor what he thought of the city of Paris, which he had just most carefully surveyed, said: "Well, it is a very fine city for one which has just been stormed by architects!"



This jest did not fall on barren soil, and the decree ordering the clearing of the streets, soon made its appearance. It was generally considered certain that it would be impossible to enforce it.

The architects especially, even the Emperor's, M. Fontaine, the most sensible and intelligent of them all, declared the thing impossible. And indeed, from the Place de la Bastille to the Place Louis XVI. inclusively, blocks of stone filled so much space on the boulevards that three vehicles could not pass abreast, while, in some places, it was difficult for even two to do so. A worse state of affairs existed on the quays. The Place des Victoires and the Place du Carrousel were both covered with an immense pile of these same blocks, through which streets had been opened just wide enough for the traffic that was indispensable. I first made an inspection of the various localities, and then I designated the places other than the public roadway where sheds and places of storage could be located, and I next issued an ordinance showing how the matter could be disposed of. Besides this measure, I repeatedly saw to it myself, by going over the city in all directions, and, in the course of a few weeks, the streets were completely cleared.

Towards the end of my first month at the *préfecture de police*, the individual to whom were farmed the games of chance called on me. He brought me a sum of five thousand francs, which he told me it was customary to pay M. Dubois every month. I enquired of him for what purpose. He replied that it was a voluntary gratuity, but which should be considered as one of the perquisites of my office. I told him to keep his money until further orders; but, as this disbursement had naturally been included in his calculations of expenses, at the time he had entered into negotiations for his lease, I did not think it right that I should let him enjoy the benefit of this item, and so, when rendering

an account of the case to the Minister of Police, to whom was paid the amount agreed upon as the price of this odious business, I begged him to get the Emperor's orders with regard to the use to be made of this bribe. I at the same time took care to lay the matter before the Archchancellor and M. Maret, as I felt little confidence in the report which the Duc de Rovigo might make. However, he made just the one I could desire. "I was well aware," said the Emperor, after hearing the story, "that dear old Dubois got money from every possible source, and it is the reason why, in spite of his repeated entreaties, I would never place his salary on the same footing as that of the Prefect of the Seine." Some days afterwards, the Emperor instructed the Minister of Police to accept the amount together with the rest of the rental, and to add it to my salary.

One of the greatest difficulties I had to overcome resulted from the perpetual check exercised by the five or six police systems, several of which exercised their functions and acted in a spirit of rivalry to one another. Thus, besides the *préfecture de police*, there was that of the Minister, that of the military commander of the division and Governor of Paris, that of the Grand Marshal of the Palace Duroc, and that of the commandant of the day of the Imperial Guard. When at times this command fell to Marshal Davout, one hardly knew to whom to listen. It was nothing but a continual series of complaints and denunciations. To crown all, there was the police of the commander-general of the gendarmerie. The narrow and finical mind of Marshal Moncey had full play by means of this one, forever unearthing new subjects of worry and trouble. Again, one had to be on his guard against private reports and information supplied by secret letters, the full number of which has never been revealed.

The Emperor's distrustful mind has often been alluded

to, and indeed he was suspicious to an extraordinary extent; but, it may freely be said that it required an enormous strength of character not to allow himself to give way to this failing more than he did. Grand Marshal Duroc's superior and often very judicial mind enabled him, better than all others, to set a correct estimate on things, and with no one were my official relations more pleasant. The manner in which he had arranged the household service, the way in which he kept the palace in order, and the appropriate measures he took to ensure the Emperor's safety, were truly to be commended. Hardly any guards on watch, scarcely any visible measures of caution, and never the slightest appearance of disorder or confusion. Every one had his duty set, and remained within its limits. With seven or eight sentries in the interior of the palace, two guard-rooms, one in the court and the other at the foot of the main stairway, and two or three purveyors (for the table), everything was provided for.

I believe I can therefore truly say that no sovereign was ever better protected than Napoleon. It must indeed be remarked that the Grand Marshal had shown the wise precaution of insisting that very few people should dwell in the château. Only those whose duties were in constant demand had rooms there.

One of the most important matters among the several measures which served to enlighten the police, was the secret prying into letters. This could only be done at the General Post Office, and the care of it was entrusted to a man of honor and delicate sentiments. I make bold to say that M. de La Valette never went further in the exercise of this duty than was strictly required of him by the exigencies of his position, that he never allowed himself to gratify a mere idle curiosity, or to gain favor by furnishing food to the animosities of his master.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Official announcement of the pregnancy of the Empress Marie-Louise —

The Pope's refusal to grant bulls of installation to several bishops — An ecclesiastical commission called together by Napoleon to remedy the embarrassment thus created by the Holy See — Findings of this commission with regard to apostolic bulls, to an appeal to a general council, and to pontifical fulminations — New appointments made by the Emperor to the vacant sees of Paris and of Nancy — Briefs issued by Pius VII. against these appointments — Cardinal Fesch's opposition to Napoleon's wishes — The Paris Chapter agitates against Cardinal Maury — Violent allocution by the Emperor, on New Year's Day, 1811, to the Vicars-General, and his apostrophe to the Abbé d'Astros, whose arrest is ordered — Napoleon's violent outburst, at the Council of State, against M. Portalis, the confidant of the Abbé d'Astros — This councillor exiled, in spite of M. Pasquier's intercession — A search made in the very closet of the Pope at Savona — Arrest of several prelates and members of the Sacred College — The French clergy thrown into a state of terror.

THE pregnancy of the Empress had already become known during the stay of the Court at Fontainebleau, and it was officially announced to the Senate early in November. A circular was simultaneously sent to the archbishops and bishops to inform them of this happy event. It can be said that the news of it gave general satisfaction, as it was the presage of the best of guarantees towards the tranquil state which was the most ardent hope of the people of that great empire, but . . .

There appeared, in the first days of November, a decree ordering that the archiepiscopal buildings of Paris should immediately be put in a condition such as to render them suitable to serve as a palace for the Pope. New troubles,

new anxieties, could therefore be expected. I have spoken of the Holy Father's enforced residence at Savona and the state of confinement in which he was kept, deprived of his habitual and necessary councillors. I have also told what happened in connection with the absence of the cardinals from the wedding ceremony. Since that time, trouble had arisen with regard to the bulls of installation asked for for several bishops. Matters soon reached such a climax that it was refused to grant a single one.

This necessitated turning over the governing of the dioceses, whereof the sees became vacant, to administrators appointed by the Chapters. The precedent for this had been set by Henry IV., and had been followed during the quarrels of Louis XIV. with the Court of Rome. But the times were altogether different. France possessed in those days a clergy of a high degree, as remarkable for its learning as for its illustrious birth. The Gallican episcopate, honored and revered throughout the Catholic world, was a power in the state as well as in the Church. Moreover, Louis XIV. was opposed to unquiet or exaggerated pretensions, he merely became the attacking party for purposes of self-defence, and his religious sentiments could not be suspected. Napoleon, although not possessing all these advantages, had nevertheless thought that it would be an easy matter for him to take up his position on the same battle-ground, and relying on the declaration of the clergy in 1682 and the four articles drawn up by Bossuet, he persuaded himself that he was to find in the tenets of the Gallican Church and in the ancient uses of the Church, an assured way of emerging triumphantly from the perplexities into which he had become involved through his repeated acts of rashness and outrageous treatment of the Holy Father.

He had already, towards the end of 1809, called together



an ecclesiastical commission, with the object of finding a way to provide for the needs of the Church. Its members were Cardinals Fesch and Maury, the Archbishop of Tours, the bishops of Nantes, Trèves, Evreux, and Vercelli, of Father Fontana, the former Superior-General of the Barnabites, and the Abbé Emery, the Superior of Saint-Sulpice. These selections were, generally speaking, of a nature to inspire the consciences of the faithful with confidence.

Cardinal Fesch, already favorably known through the zeal with which he had on several occasions taken up the defence of the rights of the Church, of the episcopate, and even of the Holy Apostolic See, could boast of many things to his credit, on this occasion. Owing to his relationship to Napoleon, he never had any difficulty in approaching him, and was enabled to give to his words an energetic plainness which few people would have ventured on. The bishop of Nantes, M. Duvoisin, a former professor at the Sorbonne, and the author of a work on the principal truths of Christianity, inspired a large amount of confidence. M. Emery, the Superior of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, enjoyed a high reputation of learning and piety; he was the oracle of the French clergy. Lastly, Father Fontana passed for being well versed in ecclesiastical matters, and at the same time was strongly attached to the Holy See.

Several questions having been submitted to this commission, the answers showed wisdom and ability, and were in conformity with the ancient tenets of the Gallican Church. Regarding the principal matter at issue, which was the institution of bishops, the commission had contented itself with stating that if the terms of the Concordat were positively not going to be executed except by one of the parties in it, and if it became, as a consequence of this, necessary to proceed with another method of institution, it would above all become necessary to ensure the Church's adhe-

sion to it; that a law repealed is no longer a law, and cannot again assume the shape of one except from the power having repealed it previously.

Starting from this principle, the members of the commission took the stand that no thought could be entertained of re-establishing the Pragmatic Sanction, as seemed to be the wish of the chief of the state, except on condition that the ecclesiastical power should take a part in its establishment. But how was its co-operation to be obtained? The commission formally declared itself incompetent in this regard, believing that in so delicate a matter, the wisest thing and the one most in conformity with the established rules was to call together a mutual council, in which the clergy of the Empire would look into the proposed question, and would determine such methods as it should consider proper to meet the inconveniences arising from the papal bulls being withheld. Such had been, in a similar circumstance, the method proposed to Louis XIV., in 1688, by the Paris Parlement. Napoleon was not sufficiently satisfied with this answer. What he wished to know was whether the national council would for a certainty possess in itself the necessary authority to supplant the apostolic bulls, or whether there would still have to be an appeal to his superior power. The commission questioned anew, and thus driven to its last intrenchments, was then brought to state that it did not appertain to it to forejudge what the national council would consider advisable and proper to do within the limits of its powers; that it was to be presumed that the national council would address respectful remonstrances to the Holy Father, and might induce His Holiness to enter into an arrangement the usefulness of which would lie in the good of the Church; that, should this hope be deceived, the council might possibly consider itself empowered to draw up a provisional measure to regulate the matter, while

declaring, however, that the Church of France would not cease demanding the observation of the Concordat, and that it would ever be ready to return to it, as soon as the Holy Father or his successors would consent to execute it in so far as it concerned the Holy See. In the contrary event, there would remain as a resource of having recourse to a general council, the only authority in the Church above the Pope; but it might become impossible to get such a council to assemble, either through His Holiness's refusal to recognize it, or owing to a quantity of political circumstances which it was easy enough to foresee. What would then remain to be done? This was the knot of the question, and Napoleon wanted it cut in the most absolute way.

The commission finally gave as its reply "that after having proclaimed its constant faithfulness to the Holy See and to the person of the Holy Father, after having insisted that the discipline in force should be respected, the national council might possibly declare that, owing to the impossibility of having recourse to an œcumenical council, and owing to the immense danger which threatened the Church of France, the institution given by the Metropolitan in virtue of the powers delegated unto him by the council to his suffragans, or by the oldest of them to the Metropolitan himself, should take the place of papal bulls, until such times as the Pope or his successors were prepared to consent to the execution of the Concordat." Such a provisional return to a part of the old ecclesiastical law seemed sufficiently justified in the eyes of the commission by the first of all laws, the law of necessity, which, it said, the Pope had himself recognized, when, in order to restore unity in the Church of France, he had risen superior to ordinary rules, in suppressing by an unprecedented exercise of his authority the old ecclesiastical divisions, in order to create new ones. The expedient indicated by the

last part of the council's answer, was precisely the one Napoleon was anxious to resort to.

Concerning the bull of excommunication, the commission, after a most able debate as to the facts and principles involved, had no hesitation in declaring that "the censures and excommunications contained in the bull of the 10th of June were null, both in form and in fond, and that they could not bind or compel consciences." The commission had looked upon the question from a high standpoint, and, since the bull of excommunication had been issued with regard to the invasion of the Pope's temporal sovereignty, it had taken pains to prove that as faith and discipline did not rest essentially on that sovereignty, the resorting to pontifical fulminations had, on this occasion, not been justified. They had, in this connection, not been afraid to point out that, under Louis XIV. and Louis XV., Avignon had been occupied by French troops, and that the Pope had then abstained from hurling thunderbolts of excommunication.

Napoleon still continued making appointments to sees that had become vacant. Among many others, he ventured to appoint M. d'Osmond, Bishop of Nancy, to the Florence see, and Cardinal Maury to the Paris one.

The appointment of M. d'Osmond called forth a brief to which I have already referred, and which must have considerably irritated the Emperor, as it stigmatized as irregular the dissolution of his first marriage by the Parisian clergy, and thus seemed to give his enemies the most powerful weapon with which to combat the legitimacy of the children who might be born of his new union. Further briefs were issued protesting against the occupation of the Paris see by Cardinal Maury, and against his pretensions to having the administration of the diocese delegated to him by the Chapter. One of these briefs was addressed to

the Cardinal himself, for the Pope considered himself all the more entitled to intimate his orders to that prelate for the reason that, as a member of the Sacred College and as Bishop of Montefiascone, he was certainly bound to the Holy See by very close ties.

Albeit, the Cardinal did not pay any heed to the papal injunction, and neglected nothing in order to secure possession of the administration of the Paris diocese, but he encountered many difficulties, and met, on the part of the Chapter, with many obstacles which at first caused some surprise, the Chapter having, up to that time, shown itself most docile. Yet, it would have been easy enough to explain this opposition, had one but turned one's thoughts to the potent influence which could have been, nay, which must have been exercised on the minds of the canons, by the example of Cardinal Fesch, who, on being appointed to the same archbishopric previous to Cardinal Maury, had, in spite of being invited to it by the Chapter, denied himself all spiritual ministrations. This example was even referred to by the Pope in his brief to the new archbishop.

Not one of the least singular things in the history of Napoleon is the opposition which he was always to encounter in the execution of his designs regarding the clergy and the Holy See, from the man who it seemed should have been most devoted to him, from the one whom he had promoted to so high a dignity only because of the idea that he would always find in him a ready and docile instrument; and indeed, when one merely looked at the past of that man, his elevation to the cardinalate might be deemed a scandal; but, there was in his character something of the Bonaparte family, and, when once called upon to play the part of a prelate and of an Eminence, he entered upon his part as seriously and no less conscientiously than his nephew Louis in the task which royalty had imposed on him. In



vain did the Emperor lay siege to him with every means at his command and in every possible form of speech, even those of the most cruel pleasantries, making allusions to the immorality of his youth and to his behavior during the days preceding his return to the practices of his religion,<sup>1</sup> he always remained immovable, warded off arguments, and disposed of duties by alleging his duties, and intrenching himself behind the profound conviction to which he had had the happiness to return. His conduct, which was always strictly proper, was, under all circumstances, as circumspect as firm; and, while never failing in the outward regard which he owed to his sovereign and to the author of his fortune, it can be said that he was ever at the head of the religious opposition which the Emperor continually found in his path, to the end of his reign.

By dint of defending the interests and the just rights of the Pope, Cardinal Fesch was led to adopt principles far too ultramontane, and made it a practice to show favor to ecclesiastics and laymen who even in secret professed such principles. Thus it was that he became the patron of the Jesuits, whom he unfortunately bequeathed to France, when departing from French territory.

The agitation in the Paris Chapter consequent upon the pretensions of Cardinal Maury began to manifest itself in a more marked fashion during the course of November. I knew of it, but I was not in any way compelled to take notice of it. M. Portalis, the comptroller and censor of the book-trade, with whom I was on intimate terms, called on me in the middle of December, and told me that he knew as a fact that a papal brief enjoining the Chapter

<sup>1</sup> I have heard from people who had witnessed it the account of a scene of this kind, which had taken place at Fontainebleau, in the very drawing-room of the Empress, and while some thirty persons were present. The Emperor's sarcasms had reached the point of coarseness, but the countenance of the Cardinal remained unmoved.

from conferring powers of administration on Cardinal Maury, and declaring null and void everything he might do by virtue of any powers delegated to him by the Chapter, had reached Paris. The Government had indeed heard of the brief addressed to the Cardinal; but, as no one was more interested than himself in keeping it a secret, he could not be suspected of indiscretion in this connection. Hence if it was that one to which M. Portalis had reference, it must of necessity have been forwarded to some other person in Paris. As a matter of fact, in spite of the close watch set upon the Pope at Savona, not only this brief, but yet another couched in much stronger terms, had reached Paris through an ecclesiastic to whom His Holiness had sent it direct.

M. Portalis, when telling me of this, added that he could not reveal to me how the knowledge of so important a fact had come to him, but he would say that, if proper measures were not taken, the brief would, within the next few days, go the rounds of Paris; he thought it most desirable that this should be prevented; that, if the Minister of Police saw fit to send for such and such ecclesiastics whose names he gave me, and tell them that he was aware of the existence of the brief, and that his mind was made up, in case it was made public, to hold them formally responsible for such publication, one might rest assured that they would find a way to prevent its contents being divulged. As a matter of course, M. Portalis allowed me to go and carry this piece of news to the Minister, and I hastened to do so. The Minister seemed well pleased, told me that he would profit by the information, and I was entitled to believe that he had followed out the advice I had given him, for, by the end of December, nothing had been heard of the brief.

Meanwhile the discord between the Cardinal and his

Chapter went on increasing. At the head of the recalci-trants was the Abbé d'Astros, a canon and vicar-general, and closely related to M. Portalis. He had previously made himself prominent by his opposition to the intention entertained by the Chapter of granting powers to Cardinal Fesch, and there had, at the time, been some talk of sending him into exile. But the Cardinal, who would none of these powers, and who was only too glad that he should be spared the embarrassing trouble of making his refusal public, had obtained the repeal of the order.

In pursuance of the line of conduct I had set myself of never interfering with matters not within my jurisdiction, and as I did not seek for opportunities to talk privately with the Emperor, I had exercised the greatest care of action or word which might have implicated me any further in the affair, when once I had delivered to the Minister of Police the message entrusted to me by M. Portalis.

On New Year's Day, 1811, Cardinal Maury having appeared at the head of his Chapter to pay the chief of the state the usual compliments of the season, Napoleon grasped the opportunity to express his displeasure, and, addressing himself particularly to the vicars-general, he said: "Above all, sirs, you must be French; it is the way of being at the same time good Christians. The doctrine of Bossuet is the only sure guide; with it no one can go astray. What I am now saying (pointing to the Abbé d'Astros) is principally for your benefit, reverend sir. I know that you are opposed to the measures dictated by my policy, that you do not cease indulging in underhand practices to neutralize its effect; but your designs are known to me, and I will take care to thwart them."

After such an allocution, made in the presence of so many witnesses, it was impossible not to expect some act of severity. No sooner was the audience over, than the Car-

dinal, going up to M. d'Astros, asked him to accompany him to the Minister of Police, who was desirous of discussing certain matters with him. Had the Cardinal been endowed with ever so little tact, or even with the least sentiment of propriety, he would have perceived all the indecency and indelicacy of appealing to such an interference between himself and his subordinate; at the most, he should have referred the matter to the Minister of Public Worship.

The Minister, assisted by M. Réal, in the first place questioned the abbé as to the motives governing his opposition, and regarding the correspondence he was doubtless keeping up with Savona. M. d'Astros having replied in the negative, or evasively, to all questions put to him, the Minister finally asked him for his resignation, which M. d'Astros declined to give. This refusal was the determining cause of his arrest; but, ere he was taken to Vincennes, he was taken to his domicile, in order that he should be present whilst his papers were being searched. Nothing escaped this search, which was carried out so minutely that the linings of his clothes were felt, and upon taking out that of his hat, the unfortunate brief of which M. Portalis had spoken to me was found. I think it was the one the first copy of which had been sent to Cardinal Maury; the second copy was not discovered till later. When asked as to the use he had made of this brief and to whom he had imparted its contents, M. d'Astros, with inconceivable weakness, mentioned three : M. de Calprade, a canon of the Cathedral, the Abbé Guairard, the chief official of the book-trade department, and M. Portalis, who was at its head. What did he expect to obtain by this confession? Perhaps it was that he wished to give a proof of his good faith, and prove that he had not acted with any bad intentions by showing that he had limited his confidence to so small a number of persons.

I was totally ignorant of the discovery that had been made and of the confessions of M. d'Astros, when on stopping at the residence of the Minister of Police, next morning, on my way to the Council of State, I was greatly surprised to have him speak to me in the following terms: "If you come across M. Portalis going to the Council, be careful not to advise him not to pursue his journey." I asked him why he made this request, but I could obtain no explanation from him. On reaching the Council, I found M. Portalis already at his place. Napoleon presided. Hardly was he seated, when began a scene, which I could not help thinking had been prearranged, as I recalled the words which the Duc de Rovigo had suffered to escape his lips. Nevertheless, nothing was missing to give it the appearance of an outburst of anger which could not be kept within bounds.

Having first asked if M. Portalis were present, the Emperor immediately asked him in the harshest terms "how he dared to present himself in the body of the Council, after the act of treason of which he had been guilty." Then, going into the details of this act of treason, which consisted in having fostered and been cognizant of a rebellious correspondence with the Pope, with a foreign potentate, he declared that "there never had been seen more perfidious treachery, that in the course of his life he had never experienced any which had caused him greater disgust, and this infamy proceeded from a man in whom he had reposed the utmost confidence. He could not find words to express his indignation."

What I am telling here in a few lines, was, in his mouth, the subject matter of a philippic which it took him over a quarter of an hour to deliver. His voice, his gestures, his face, assumed the most fearful aspect as he progressed, and, when he came to an end, everybody remained dumb



with horror and stupefaction. M. Portalis, overwhelmed and crushed, could only stammer out a few words, in which he expressed his conviction that he had not failed in any of his duties, in not betraying a relative and friend of his youth, and whom he had sought, moreover, to hold back in the dangerous paths upon which he saw him entering.

These few words had hardly been spoken, when the Emperor resumed with fresh vehemence his terrible allocution, finding means to give vent to his fury in still more biting terms. I considered that it no longer became me to remain silent, and taking advantage of the first lull in the conversation, I stated that it was my duty to complete M. Portalis's defence, and to supplement that to which his state of emotion had not permitted him to give utterance. I consequently went on to narrate what had taken place between us towards the middle of the foregoing month, and told of the notification I had, on his recommendation, sent to the Minister of Police. I added that the Minister had doubtless made good use of the information, as the brief would have remained enveloped in the utmost secrecy and would still have been undiscovered, had it not been found at the place of residence of M. d'Astros, who had not dared to make use of it. I concluded by setting forth that the confidential communication made to me by M. Portalis should be sufficient to remove all suspicion of treason from him, and that it would be more plausible to make me appear guilty rather than he, by arguing that I had not made all the use of the warning which it was possible for me to get out of it.

This extremely short plea, which put an entirely new face on the question, and seemed to arouse the interest of the Council to the highest degree, brought an expression of intense feeling of annoyance to the face of the Emperor. After an instant's silence, he began afresh,

seemingly paying no attention to my words, and continued overwhelming M. Portalis with his reproaches. I was desirous of asking to be heard once more, but was stopped by my neighbor, M. de La Valette, who begged me to desist, assuring me that at this stage I would be rather injuring than mending matters. And truly, what hope was there of prevailing with a character cast in such a mould, when it had gone so far? The scene ended with the following words: "Leave, sir, and let me never see you again."

M. Portalis having thereupon left the Chamber, the entire Council remained silent for some minutes. The silence was at last broken by Napoleon, who, in much gentler tones, expressed the deepest grief at having met what he still persisted in calling treason in a body where he had, up to the present, found nothing but loyalty and devotion to his person, and which had consequently always received the highest proofs of his confidence, and in the midst of which he was in the habit of speaking and unbosoming himself with entire freedom. The unfortunate occurrence which had just taken place would doubtless be felt by all the members of the Council as by himself, and he would do them the justice of believing that they were deeply grieved over it. "The Prefect of Police," he added, "has nevertheless seen fit to come to the defence of M. Portalis, but he is his friend, and some allowance is to be made for the feeling which prompted him to undertake the talk."

Thus, he did not give utterance to any formal expression of doubt as to the facts which I had presented, and it is evident that he had employed the time during which he had remained silent, to make up his mind as to what course he should adopt with regard to me. The trouble, should he sacrifice me, of having to go in quest of a new Prefect of Police, and perchance, the idea that it would be too contemptible to punish an act of conscience and sincerity,

doubtless determined him in sparing me. Yet, in spite of this considerate treatment, and the graciousness of his closing words to the Council, the harm had been done, and all of us, Councillors of State, *maîtres des requêtes*, and *auditeurs*, felt an impression of wretchedness and fear which it was not in his power to remove. The sight of omnipotence thus crushing its victim, without allowing him either time or means for defence, has in it something disheartening. It wounds to the quick one's feelings of self-respect, and shocks the most submissive consciences.

M. Regnaud alone took upon himself to utter a few words, the somewhat obscure drift of which did not please anybody, not even the Emperor, who interrupted him rather abruptly, by taking up one of the orders of the day. Yet this is the scene which M. de Las Cases, in his *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, has undertaken to present as one that was entirely paternal and affecting. As a *maître des requêtes* he was a witness of it, and on these grounds he lays a claim to the credibility which is granted to a truthful and conscientious witness. Unfortunately for him, more than eighty persons were present during the occurrence, and I challenge him to find any two who will look at it in the same light as he has done.<sup>1</sup> But he was desirous of setting his hero above all blame. Everything that I said and did at that sitting has been passed in silence.

On my return home, I sat down to write to the Emperor, and implored his clemency in terms I thought most likely to make some impression on him. I repeated that if any blame could be attached to anybody, it was to myself. I therefore begged His Majesty to return to fairer sentiments

<sup>1</sup> On the following day, M. de Cambacérès, who was nevertheless accustomed to the outbursts of imperial fury, said to M. d'Hauterive, who had been too unwell to be present: "You are indeed fortunate. I am still ill over it."

towards a man who was at heart devoted to him, and who was more unfortunate than guilty. I added this letter to my police report, and it went to its destination at eight.<sup>1</sup>

Having performed this duty, I called on M. Portalis, whom I found writing to Napoleon, but somewhat embarrassed as to the way in which he could make his letter reach the Emperor without delay. I took charge of the matter, and carried it to M. Maret, who made no difficulty in consenting to hand it to the Emperor, the same evening, between 10 and 11 o'clock, the time at which he sat down to work. He told me to call on him again next day, after 11 o'clock, and that he would let me know the result of his undertaking. I also told him of the letter I had written, and I must do him the justice to say that he showed himself deeply moved and greatly pained over what had happened at the Council that morning. On all occasions, moreover, I found M. Maret to be a most kind-hearted man. On my returning to see him at the appointed hour, he told me that he had seen to it that the Emperor would read M. Portalis's letter, as well as my own, which had not been opened at the time he arrived. "It is most unfortunate," he went on to say, "that I did not enter the Emperor's study until after the Minister of Police, who was leaving as I went in. He was taking away an order of exile, which I failed to get recalled, and which, I am fully convinced, would not have been issued, had the two letters been read previously."

I returned home with this painful information, and had already retired for the night when I received a despatch from the Minister of Police, enclosing this order of exile, with the injunction to see that effect was given to it the same night. On the first impulse I felt wroth at the Duc

<sup>1</sup> This letter is to be found among the Archives.

de Rovigo for this affectation of entrusting to me a duty which he might very well have left to one of the agents directly under him — to his inspector-general, for instance, of whom he was in the habit of making use on like occasions. On second thoughts, it struck me that perhaps it was better that so painful a mission should be given to me rather than to any other, as I might mitigate its form, and it would enable me, while taking leave of my friend, to receive his final instructions with regard to all the interests he was leaving behind him in Paris. Matters passed off as I had anticipated, and I gave him all assurances that I could which were likely to console him. He left at 5 o'clock in the morning, on his way to Aix, in Provence, where his family had long been known, and where his father had left the most honorable memories.

The same day, I took care to be present at the *lever*, where all eyes were turned towards me, for everybody was anxious to see what kind of a reception I was to meet with. The Emperor, on coming to me, merely remarked: "I am afraid, sir, that you do not possess very clear notions of the duties of a Councillor of State." — "In this respect, as in every other, Sire, I believe that a man does not risk making many mistakes, if he but listens to the dictates of his conscience."

Such was literally my reply. He passed on without adding another word, and never since did he in conversation with me refer to that wretched business. The words I have just recorded are, moreover, the only ones which he ever spoke to me in the way of reproach, during the whole time that I came into contact with him. I have always been convinced, together with M. Maret, that the Emperor, who had been wrongly guided in this matter by the Duc de Rovigo's first reports, had very soon come to regret the ill-temper into which he had allowed himself to be carried



away. One thing remains certain, and is that although he must have known that I was in constant correspondence with M. Portalis, he never let me know that he felt any displeasure over it, and when, three years later, the Comte Molé, at that time Minister of Justice, suggested to him to appoint as First President of the Imperial Court of Angers, the man whom he so loudly proclaimed a traitor, he made not the slightest objection, and signed his appointment without any hesitation.

I had accomplished with firmness a duty enjoined on me both by my conscience and my personal feelings. My status became all the better from it, not only in the Council, but in the midst of everything composing the government, even of all that surrounded the Emperor. From that moment, people were willing to see in the new Prefect of Police a man who, under difficult circumstances, would have the courage to speak the truth and to stand up in defence of what was worthy of being defended.

The ministers showed me special consideration, and the Duc de Rovigo himself understood that I was a man who had to be reckoned with, and that after having defied the wrath of the Emperor, I would not much longer suffer myself to be oppressed by him, so his methods towards me underwent a notable change. It became more and more established in his mind, as well as in that of the Emperor, that no idea was to be entertained of calling upon me for the carrying out of the combinations and operations of higher police duty. Hence, I never had cause to complain in this respect. In matters affecting the clergy, for instance (they are those which gave rise to the most coercive measures), my services were never called into requisition. If the Minister occasionally sent to the *préfecture de police* in order that they should be detained in a set of rather comfortable rooms, known collectively as the *salle Saint-Martin*, prison-

ers whom he did not see fit to send at once to Vincennes, I was always left free to treat them with proper consideration.

It is thus that I have had confided to my care Mme. de Quinsonas and that worthy Dame de Soyecourt, who has since devoted the better part of her income to found, in the former Carmelite convent a community of nuns whose mission is to offer up to God unceasing prayers in the place consecrated by the blood of the priests who were butchered in the month of September, 1792. I had her placed in a room in the part of the building wherein I resided myself, and she took a daily walk in my garden, but always under the eye of a police agent. If I mention this daily promenade, it is because it gave some anxiety to M. Demarest, who got the Duc de Rovigo to mention the matter to me as an act of leniency which might lead up to the lady's escape. This occurred in the early days of my incumbency. I replied that I assumed the responsibility of such a contingency.

The exiling of M. Portalis was immediately followed by the arrest of M. de Calprade and of the Abbé Guairard. Orders were at the same time sent to Savona, by telegraph from Turin, that the strictest search should be made in the Pope's very closet. It took place while he was taking his usual walk in the garden of the Archbishop's palace, and resulted in the discovery of a first brief conferring extraordinary powers upon Cardinal di Pietro, and of a second one commissioning Father Fontana, a member of the ecclesiastical commission, and M. Gregorio, a Roman prelate, to notify Cardinal Maury of the contents of the one which concerned him.

This discovery resulted in a renewal of several measures against the Pope, whose household was entirely broken up, and who, from that time, remained alone with his physi-

cian, and a few servants who were in the pay of the French government. It also brought about the arrest of Father Fontana, of M. Gregorio, of Cardinal di Pietro, and two other members of the Sacred College, Cardinals Gabrielli and Oppisoni, who were already in exile at Saumur. They were all brought to the Vincennes keep, and remained in the strictest confinement, together with the Abbé d'Astros, who, it was reported, was soon to be brought to trial.

It could in truth be said that terror was at that moment hovering over the clergy of France, especially over that of Paris, for there was talk of including in the trial of the Abbé d'Astros, all those who, directly or indirectly, had participated in circulating the brief. Cardinal Maury took advantage of the opportunity to persuade the Chapter that the only way of saving the Abbé d'Astros was to deprive him of the powers with which he had been invested, and to present to the Emperor an address embodying a satisfactory declaration of faith regarding capitulary administration. He experienced some difficulty in obtaining such a result, but, in the end, everything was settled just as the Emperor and himself wished it. The address of the Chapter was drawn up; it was well received, and was forwarded to all the bishops in France and Italy, with a request that they should concur in it. It met with all the success the Government could expect, as, for some time, the columns of the *Moniteur* were filled with declarations of adhesion which poured in from every quarter.

## CHAPTER XIX

Inner administration of the Préfecture de Police—Singular use made of confiscated books—The fate of political writings—Secret agents of the Government—Inspector-General Veyrat—The clerk Perlet—General Danican—Reforms and improvements brought about by M. Pasquier—Measures concerning domestic servants—Personnel of the medical dispensary attached to the Préfecture—The Fire Brigade reorganized on a military basis—The provisioning of Paris—The relations existing between the Prefect of Police and his subordinate *commissaires*.

I WILL leave aside for a moment general politics, and give a few details on the inner workings of the Préfecture de Police.

I had discovered, among other settled abuses, what became of obscene books. When seized by the police, they were never destroyed, but merely stored in a room on the second floor of the préfecture. M. Veyrat, the inspector-general, and perhaps a few others, had the keys to this store-room, and were not in the least backward in making presents of the books to their friends. M. Dubois did likewise. I have been told that on several occasions, when giving a dinner to his colleagues, he had conceived the idea of presenting each one of them, by way of a courtesy, with a packet containing the most interesting specimens of that kind of literature. But, this was not the most reprehensible part of the affair, for a certain quantity of the confiscated books always ended in being returned to the booksellers or to the hawkers from whom they had been taken, in consideration of a handsome figure paid either to M. Veyrat or his agents, thus constituting a most lucrative

branch of trade. There was but one way of ending the matter, and that was to destroy the books. I so ordered it, and had them destroyed in my presence.

I decided that everything that was in that store-room should be burned in the courtyard of the préfecture. Certain precautions were necessary to guard against the consuming of so great a quantity of paper endangering the safety of the surrounding buildings. I remembered a large iron gridiron which had served to burn up *assignats* in the courtyard of the Treasury. It was still in existence, and so I asked for the loan of it, and the operation was accomplished without trouble in the space of three hours.

It is a noteworthy fact that books seized on political grounds were always carefully reduced to pulp immediately after their seizure. Two or three copies were kept to be used, in case of need, as documentary evidence, or for purposes of comparison. Hence it was that I found in the store-room the only two copies extant of M. de Bonald's first work entitled *La Théorie du pouvoir*. It is perhaps the most remarkable of all those which came from his pen. The author himself did not possess a single copy of it, so I let him have one, while the other, I must fain confess, found a place on my own bookshelves. This was slightly swerving from the path of duty, but I hardly consider my action worthy of blame.

I was, during the course of my incumbency, to make a still sadder discovery, but of an entirely different nature. M. Fiévée told me one day, at a meeting of the Council of State, that I had on my staff a most unfortunate individual, whom he commended to me in a more special fashion for the reason that he was connected with him by ties of blood. This man was a M. Perlet, his brother-in-law, a clerk in the secretary's office at the Préfecture de Police. He had been transported, on the 18th Fructidor, together



with Messieurs de Marbois, Pichegru, and many other victims of note. This transportation had been the cause of his ruin, as it had been fatal to the existence of a journal of which he was at the time both editor and proprietor. On returning to France after the 18th Brumaire, he had tried every possible means of retrieving his fallen fortunes, but nothing had succeeded with him, and he had been only too glad to obtain a clerkship in the offices of the préfecture. "It is true," added M. Fiévée, "that his conduct since his return to France has not been altogether blameless, and I do not pretend to say that he is all that he should be, but some indulgence must be shown to an unfortunate fellow who has been so sorely tried by circumstances." I replied that my opinion on this point coincided with his own, and that if I found the opportunity of doing anything for his brother-in-law, I would eagerly seize it.

I sent the very next day for M. Perlet to come to my private office, informed him of my promise to M. Fiévée, and of my intention to act up to it. I was surprised at the warmth of his thanks, which I could not help seeing were stamped with a fulsomeness and an air of humility which greatly displeased me, and almost made me regret the kindly way in which I had spoken to him. This unfortunate impression was confirmed by a letter which I received from him two days later. He informed me that, taking advantage of certain connections which his transportation had given him with men devoted to the Royalist cause, he had become the secret agent of the Imperial Government, and had, under the dictation of M. Demarest and M. Dubois, kept up a correspondence in England with one of the best known agents of the pretender to the French throne, M. Fauche-Borel. The object of this correspondence was to discover the secrets of the Royalist party, and more partic-

ularly to learn who were the men whom it occasionally sent across to France, and to be punctually informed of their landing. He stated that he had discovered a way of causing it to be believed that there was in Paris a Royalist committee, whose organ he was, and in whose name he always spoke. Finally, he had been sent to England, as he said, "to become acquainted with the resources and hopes of the Bourbons, and to finish discrediting with the British Government, Messieurs de Puisaye and d'Entraigues. The former was to be feared, as he enjoyed potent means for fomenting dissensions and for sending agents into France." He added: "I have succeeded in my mission beyond expectation, and you will find proof of this in the original letters which are on file in the pigeon-holes of the préfecture."

Once set on the track by M. Perlet himself, it was easy for me to glean a great deal more about the matter than he had told me. I interrogated the chief clerk in the secretary's office, and the chief of the first division of police, both of them most worthy men, whom I could trust. They both spoke to me of this wretch in terms of disgust, informed me that he was a Genevese, and as such a fellow-countryman of M. Veyrat, who had been the means of his entering the secret police, and had introduced him to M. Dubois. On his returning from England, M. Fauche-Borel, in order to keep up the connection cemented with him in London, had sent to him one of his nephews, one Vitel, who had just arrived from India. The latter had no secrets from his uncle's friend, Perlet, and went so far as to inform him that his instructions were secreted in the hollow of his walking-stick, which was of hazel, and hardly liable to attract attention. After Perlet had got out of the young man all he wanted to know, he had him arrested by his friend Veyrat, who promptly examined the walking-stick

containing the incriminating documents, and the unfortunate Vitel was handed over to a military commission, sentenced to death, and shot on the plain of Grenelle.

Ever since that time a state of discord had existed between the two wretches, at least to outward appearances, and it did not call for any great effort of prudence on my part not to believe in it. I learnt from the chief of the first division that all the minutes of the correspondence were in the possession of M. Veyrat, who was the depositary of a vocabulary, written on a number of cards, and which served to disguise the identity of the names used in that correspondence. I summoned M. Veyrat, at the very moment he least expected it, and ordered him to bring me at once the portfolios containing the minutes and the vocabulary. I entertained the hope of thus taking away from him every means of following, unknown to me, so odious a machination; and indeed I did not hear another word about the matter until the day came when the Duc de Rovigo had M. Perlet arrested, because he had detained for several days, without communicating them to M. Demarest, two letters which he had received from London. It thus became demonstrated to me that my precautionary measure had availed but little, as, according to all appearances, M. Demarest possessed a duplicate of the words agreed upon. It was a pleasure for me to be thus rid of this wretch.

Among the documents which I made M. Veyrat deliver up to me, were two whereof I must say something. One was the minute of a letter written by Perlet, on the 3d of August, 1806, to Fauche-Borel. This letter was the joint work of M. Demarest, Perlet, and M. Dubois. This document was keenly interesting to me, for the reason that, written as it was at the time of my being appointed a *maître des requêtes*, M. Dubois had made use of the opportunity to make some enquiries about me, in order to find out whether

M. Molé and myself did not keep up some relations with the princes of the House of Bourbon. The passage having reference to us was entirely in M. Dubois's handwriting, and couched in most adroit terms.

The second document was a lengthy memorandum in M. Perlet's handwriting, but drawn up by General Danican, an *émigré*, who resided in London. This memorandum contained some rather interesting particulars on the life led in England by all the French princes, their followers, and also about the principal persons of note who at the time were in communication with the British Ministry. These persons were, as a general rule, spoken of disparagingly, especially M. de Puisaye and M. d'Entraigues. It is probable that the memorandum was the joint production of Danican and Perlet, as part of the latter's mission, and that it must have doubtless been laid before some member of the British Cabinet. When we thus find M. Danican, combining forces with M. Perlet and aiding him in his plans, it would be a hard matter not to recall his temporary appearance, as commanding officer of the National Guard of Paris, on the 13th Vendémiaire, and it is difficult not to see in this the confirmation of the doubts engendered about him owing to his behavior at that period.

One sees in all its shamefacedness, in the account given by Perlet of his trip, the rôle that he played as concerns Louis XVIII., who had greeted him with the most affecting kindness. I was to come across this man once more. On emerging from prison, in 1814, he had the audacity to present himself at the Tuileries, and to request an audience of the king. I heard of it, and made it my duty to prevent His Majesty being imposed on in so shameful a fashion. Perlet was shown the door.

The agents of the Préfecture de Police had retained habits and methods recalling those of the Revolution. In vain

had the Consulate and the Empire succeeded to the Republic and to the Directoire; in vain had the central office, composed of men of low degree, been merged into M. Dubois, Prefect of Police, then M. Dubois, Councillor of State, then M. le comte Dubois; the public was, in some of the departments of his administration, treated almost as highhandedly as in the days of happy equality. By placing all individuals on the same level, one had at the same time assumed the right of treating them all with equal brutality. This mode of procedure had nevertheless become, it must be confessed, somewhat of an anomaly in a country where dignities, titles, and decorations of all sorts had ended in resuming their place and potency. It is hard to realize how deeply the population of Paris was exercised over these methods, and how grateful it felt towards me for bringing them to an end.

The next matter to which I gave my attention was in regard to the many domestic servants dwelling in the capital, over whose conduct it was necessary to be able to easily exercise supervision, in the interests of society as a whole, and in those of their masters especially. A number of thefts had been committed of late. It struck me that a remedy to this would be the creation of *livrets* (pass-books) for servants such as those given to workmen, in which should be recorded their names and the character given to them by their masters, each time they left a situation. It would thus become impossible for them to conceal anything affecting their behavior, and all who took them into their employment would always be able to obtain such information about them as was found necessary. On the other hand, the police would thus be enabled to ascertain, when they came to get their *livret*, if some one of them had not been previously guilty of some misdeed, or had not previously incurred judicial punishment. The police could thus give



useful warnings to men who would set great store by such information, such as notaries, cashiers, bankers, in a word, to those who, more than others, had reason to fear being robbed by their servants. Nevertheless, the greatest obstacles to the execution of a measure which they were so interested in countenancing came from the masters' side. They feared that this would afford the police an opportunity of prying into their homes. Hence it is that the measure adopted by me was never fully carried out, and this also explains the readiness with which the use of the *livrets* was abandoned.

Nothing must be left undone in the administration of a big city. There is a certain matter which may justly be styled infamous, but in which important services may still be rendered. The existence of *filles publiques* is a necessary, perhaps an indispensable evil, in order to avoid greater licentiousness; but these unfortunate creatures must at least have some supervision exercised over them, and their health must be the object of a care all the greater in that it affects to a high degree the health of the youth.

The Paris police, which had generally been so careful prior to the Revolution, had nevertheless always shown in this matter a carelessness which it is difficult to explain. It is true that *filles publiques* who were known to be suffering from some disease were taken to a hospital; but it became necessary, in order that one should hear of a case, for it to have already done widespread injury and given rise to many complaints. My predecessor in office had conceived the happy idea of establishing a medical staff whose duty it was to visit them, to examine them at their place of residence, to supply them with the necessary treatment, and to notify the police when it was necessary to sequester them. Unfortunately, this idea had been deprived of its efficacy by the most revolting abuses. Each and every

*filles publiques* was compelled to pay a monthly tax destined to pay the police agents, the physicians of the board, and the physici. The total of this tax amounted to about 30,000 francs; it was more than sufficient to meet all needs, but it was put to a totally different use. A surgeon, who was an old college mate of M. Dubois, was placed at the head of the board, and he alone received a salary of 10 to 12,000 francs, which did not prevent him from turning his position into a thorough sinecure. Must I tell it? The mother-in-law and the wife of M. Dubois were not ashamed to receive, each one of them, 2000 or 3000 francs out of this fund, as an addition to their pin-money; the remainder was distributed among some subordinate agents, who, as no supervision was exercised over them, neglected their duties, or found in them an easy opportunity of levying ransom on the poor creatures, by making them pay for their silence.

It was some time before I became aware of this disgraceful state of affairs. The surgeon, M. Dubois's friend, was soon sent about his business. I then placed at the head of the dispensary a physician and a surgeon who were worthy of confidence. I gave them the power of engaging such assistants as they were in need of, and I announced that all monies derived from the tax, left over after paying regular salaries, would be distributed as bonuses to such officials or surgeons who should bestow the most care, pay the most visits, and accomplish the most cures. In nothing did I ever obtain more satisfactory results. Formerly, out of eight *filles publiques*, there was one ill; when I left the préfecture, the average had been reduced to one out of every twenty-seven.

During the same period, it fell to my lot to carry out a reorganization on which the city of Paris set great store. The fire brigade, which had so long been famed for its ex-

cellent work, had, during the past few years, completely fallen from its high state. When the Austrian ambassador's ballroom was destroyed by fire, the Emperor had expressed the greatest discontent at the manner in which the brigade had behaved. Hence, one of the first things he enjoined upon me, on my becoming Prefect of Police, was to busy myself in a serious fashion with the care of once more bringing the brigade to a high standard. There was a great difficulty in the way of accomplishing this. The brigade, while being under me in all matters concerning its active duties, defended in regard to its cost and organization, and in the matter of the appointment of its officers of the Préfecture of the Seine. The recruiting officers had allowed many young men who had influence at their backs, and some of whom had paid pretty dearly for the privilege, to become members of the brigade. Once their names were entered on the muster-roll, these young men, in order to spare themselves the boredom and fatigue of active duty, had fallen into the habit of getting old firemen to go on and do watch in their stead, for a pecuniary consideration, while the veterans approved of a régime which brought them in a pretty good income. Owing to this, the new firemen did not learn anything about their business, so that when a fire broke out, they were unable to be of any great assistance, and it took some time ere they could be mustered. Added to this, the chief of the brigade was a drunkard, and the greater number of officers ought to have been at the Invalides. On the other hand, M. Frochot, the Prefect of the Seine, a most trustworthy man, and most enlightened in matters of theory, showed such indifference, and placed such exaggerated trust in all who had anything to do with him, that it was impossible that abuses should not multiply in his administration. He must indeed have been the most good-natured of men, for no one perhaps has more

than myself opposed him in important matters, and yet, as he could not charge me with seeking to do him injury, we always lived on the best of terms.

Up to the time whereof I speak, the firemen had been selected among *bourgeois* working at some trade on their own account, when their services were not required; they were not quartered in barracks, and merely under the obligation of reporting at the guard-rooms on certain days. In order to get information to guide me in making the necessary reforms, I had several talks with competent men, especially with one Morat, the real organizer of the brigade before the Revolution. He was the only one who had been able to get any good out of it, and this had brought him somewhat high renown<sup>1</sup>. He was a very old man, and was very tenacious of his old habits and the free and semi-

<sup>1</sup> It is, generally speaking, too readily supposed that institutions admitted to be good and useful have always existed. In the matter of the public service, it must nevertheless be conceded that, regarding some of the most important matters, the benefits derived from them, generally speaking, were not enjoyed until quite recent times. The progress made in this respect has been slow, and the most important improvements do not often date any further back than the latter half of the last century. Thus the lighting up of the streets of Paris by means of lanterns placed at stated intervals and giving a light of some intensity, did not occur until from 1760 to 1770. The fire brigade was not established on a firm basis by M. Morat until from 1770 to 1780. Previous to that time, the principal assistance was given at fires by the mendicant orders; it was the Capuchin monks who climbed on the roofs, rescued from the flames those who were in danger of death, and saved the most precious chattels just as they were about to be consumed. The first fire-pumps belonged to these religious communities, who themselves dragged them to the place of danger. Lastly, no better idea can be given of the carelessness existing in regard to this matter than by relating the following fact of which I am able to guarantee the authenticity: —

In spite of the trouble which M. Morat took for ten years, in spite of a few enlightened protectors who came to his assistance, at the time of the fire which destroyed the Opéra in 1780 or 1781, this house had neither a reservoir nor any pumps of its own. For several months previous, M. Morat had earnestly endeavored to obtain the necessary funds from the civic authorities, upon whom devolved all expenditure connected with the Opéra, but, under one pretext or the other, the granting of his petition had always been rejected or adjourned.

*bourgeoise* organization with which he had obtained such good results, but times had changed.

I therefore came to the conclusion that an entirely military organization was the one to be preferred. Such an organization would necessarily involve quartering the men in barracks, and would at the outset call for a somewhat heavy outlay of money, but it would also present the advantage of holding forever at the disposal of the city a picked corps, to which might also be entrusted the guard over several of the large public institutions, thus affording relief to the ordinary garrison already so overburdened with the number of guards it had to furnish. I experienced some trouble in getting this idea adopted, but it finally triumphed. The matter was discussed in the Council of State, on a report from the Minister of the Interior, and finally the Emperor approved of a decree drawn up in conformity with my views, but he never would consent to give any of his conscripts towards the primary formation of the corps, not for its annual recruiting. He dreaded, above all things, to lay hands on the conscription land. In spite of these obstacles, I succeeded ere very long in establishing an organization on a good basis.

Following a first unfortunate selection, the general in command of the Paris garrison suggested to me as the chief of the new corps, an officer of Engineers, M. de Plazanet, who had served his country with great honor to himself, especially at the siege of Saragossa, where he had received wounds completely invaliding him. It is to him that is due the excellent footing on which was placed the Fire Brigade, which he still commands, and which has never given any cause for complaint.

I spent the spring and summer of 1811 in visiting the public institutions and the several places which required my special scrutiny. This tour of inspection was attended



by good results, and enabled me to put an end to many abuses.

I discovered many. As an instance, the trade in wood, coal, and butcher's meat was in the hands of monopolies equally detrimental to the interests of the consumer and the producer. I attempted to reorganize the *caisse* (cattle exchange) of Poissy according to a less vexatious and more truly useful system. Was this *caisse* really indispensable? I thought so for a long while, but I have my doubts about it nowadays. It sometimes happens that institutions of this kind, well conceived in their origin, continue to exist long after their utility has become a thing of the past, and nothing remains but their objectionable features.

In a general way, the following observations may be made concerning the regulations governing the provisioning of the capital. Their existence dates from before the Revolution, which swept them away in 1789. At first, this doing away with them was the cause of much confusion, which might have been remedied with the aid of a little time and a lull in the stormy political horizon; but, the *assignats*, popular disturbances, the Terror, then the "maximum" law, and a general state of distress supervened simultaneously. Then the scarcity of provisions reached its extreme limit; one lacked everything, even things of primary necessity. As soon as order was re-established, after the 18th Brumaire, and when everything had to be re-organized, the simplest way was found to be a return to the methods in vogue prior to the Revolution.

The consequences of the absolute liberty allowed in 1789 to those who saw to the provisioning of the capital, have been wrongly confounded with those which brought about the Terror, the "maximum" law, and the lack of capital, which latter was caused by the excessive use of paper money. Hence it happened that regulations, which

should have been put in force temporarily only, were adopted as a final measure. I feel convinced that the defects of this system will in the end be realized, and that it will be understood by degrees that the benefits of competition are to be sought for above all; this is what the present administration has already attempted to do, on a pretty large scale, for the meat trade, and I am of opinion that it has entered on the right path.

I devoted much care to establishing frequent intercourse between the forty-eight *commissaires de police* and myself. I met them in conference every week, questioned them about all kinds of matters, made them speak openly, and even chat confidentially, and I was thus enabled to ascertain what their abilities were and to find out which of these men were most worthy of my esteem and confidence. I also acquired in this fashion a number of particulars which would otherwise have escaped my attention. I must be forgiven if I dwell so much on the past, and I would like it to be of as much interest to the reader as to myself. It is twenty-two years since I entered public affairs; I have held many positions, I have under difficult circumstances rendered perhaps real services to my country, but the satisfaction of having done good and prevented evil, in so far as lay in my power, has never been felt by me to a greater extent than when fulfilling the duties of Prefect of Police. It is therefore natural that my thoughts should once more delight in dwelling with no little complacency on those days.

## CHAPTER XX

Retreat in Spain of Masséna, the greatest warrior after Napoleon — Consequences of the dissensions between Ney and Masséna — Marmont in command — Marshal Suchet in Catalonia — Birth of the King of Rome — Joy of Napoleon and the nation — Haughty speech of the Emperor at the opening of the *Corps législatif* — Convocation of a National ecclesiastical council — A deputation of bishops sent to Savona to wait upon the Pope — First sitting of the council, in the Archiepiscopal Palace in Paris, on the 17th of June — Serious difficulties between the Fathers of the Council and Napoleon — Energetic opposition shown by the Archbishop of Bordeaux and several bishops — Dissolution of the Council by a decree dated the 10th of July — Arrest, and imprisonment at Vincennes, of the Bishops of Tournay, Troyes, and Ghent — Deplorable effect produced by these deeds of coercion — Fears of a schism — Negotiations to ward off such a danger — Fresh meeting of the Council — A delegation of prelates again sent to the Pope, who finally grants a brief of approval — The papal brief rejected by the Council of State — Pius VII. refuses to make any further concessions — The imprisoned bishops restored to freedom on condition of resigning — Impolitic conduct of Napoleon towards the Church.

THE period comprised between the end of 1810 and the middle of 1812, was the calmest through which we passed since the days of the Consulate. We did not run any of those terrible risks to which the Prussian, Russian, and Austrian campaigns had accustomed us, and which we were to once more experience, but in more terrible form, during the next three years. Since the end of 1809, the Spanish peninsula remained the only battle-field where our soldiers were struggling. The losses consequent upon this war were enormous, but they were not fully known until such time as other and far greater disasters rendered it imperative to bring together all the military resources of the state.

Each and every month of the year 1811 was made memorable, both in Spain and Portugal, by some engagement, or by the storming or besieging of some city. I have already spoken of the little success attending the siege of Cadiz, and the failure of the expedition into Portugal. The retreat of Masséna occurred towards the beginning of March; it was the termination of the military career of that great captain, France's first military commander after Napoleon. Pichegru, Moreau, Kléber, Desaix, and Lannes are rivals above whom it may seem audacious to place anybody. I have met them all, with the exception of Desaix, but none of them has given me as completely as Masséna, the idea of a born warrior, possessing a genius for war, and endowed with all the qualities which render victory certain. His eagle eye seemed made to scan a field of battle. One could understand, on seeing him, that the soldier under his command never believed it was possible to retreat. The battle of Zurich, the defence of Genoa, and that of the village of Essling, are military feats which may be equalled, but not surpassed.

The absolute lack of subordination on the part of Marshal Ney, who was placed under his orders in the Portuguese campaign,<sup>1</sup> and the delay incurred in sending the reinforce-

<sup>1</sup> The dissensions existing between the two marshals, both previous to and after the retreat, reached such a point that Masséna, towards the end of the movement, determined upon depriving Ney of his command. It was believed for a while that Ney would resist this degradation, but he finally submitted to it. I heard, at the time, many interesting particulars concerning this state of discord and its fatal consequences. They were furnished to me by M. Lagarde, a man of parts, who was at headquarters as general commissary of police. He was to exercise the functions appertaining to his post, as soon as the army had entered Lisbon. He was, moreover, a kind of supervisor whom it had been considered proper to place near the military commanders, the necessity of such surveillance having doubtless made itself felt owing to the strange undertaking attempted by Marshal Soult, at the time of the preceding expedition. It is known that Soult had pretended to have himself proclaimed king, under the title of Nicholas I. M. Lagarde, in his narratives, attributed all the wrongs of the affair to Marshal Ney.

ments which had been promised him, were the principal causes of the failure of this campaign, which was at any rate undertaken with far too few troops. His energy met with almost insuperable obstacles; the retreat was effected across a country that had been laid waste, and in the face of superior forces, without a single man being left behind, or one of his guns abandoned. During this retreat, the soul of Masséna became possessed with a kind of disheartened feeling, which made him leave to Marshal Ney the care of repulsing the attacks directed against his rear-guard. He was also blamed, with some show of cause, of having, when re-entering Spain, let slip a magnificent opportunity of wiping out the army of the Duke of Wellington. All these combined circumstances broke the heart of the old warrior, and I do not entertain any doubt but that all the mortification he had to endure contributed greatly towards accelerating the disease of the lungs which carried him off, and which rendered him unfit to serve in the following campaigns. This was another irreparable loss to Napoleon.

Had Masséna and Lannes, during the Saxon campaigns, respectively been in command of one of the large army corps left behind in Silesia, or one whose destination was Berlin, no one can say what might not have happened, and, without wishing to cast any reflection on the men chosen in preference to them, it is allowable to think that the issue of the battles would have been different. I often met Marshal Masséna, after his return from Portugal, and his conversation always had infinite attraction for me. He had an acute, quick, and sagacious understanding.

Marshal Marmont was placed at the head of the troops, whose command Masséna and Ney were relinquishing, and the name of Army of Portugal was retained, in order to fully establish the fact that the plan of conquering that kingdom had not been given up.



Yet, its frontiers were never, from that time on, to be crossed by the French troops, and Portugal remained a kind of fortress from which the British troops, led by the Duke of Wellington, invaded Spain on several occasions.

During this time, Catalonia was the scene of the efforts and triumphs of Marshal Suchet, the only one of all the generals employed in this war who was constantly fortunate. His victory under the walls of Saguntum, his taking of that city and Tarragona, gave him, in 1811, the bâton of a marshal. He had deserved it by the vigor of his operations and the excellent order he had maintained in the army corps under his command, and in the provinces he had succeeded in conquering.

The rivalries which had proved so fatal to the direction of military operations, induced the king to try the result of a journey to Paris, in the course of the month of May. He would have liked to obtain from his brother absolute power over all the French troops occupying his kingdom. Joseph had good grounds for complaint, but he seriously deceived himself if he ventured to flatter himself with the idea that his brother would consent to cede to him the absolute command he was asking for. There was nothing on earth that Napoleon was less disposed to yield to another. His army was the basis and the primary instrument of his grandeur. The safety of his crown rested on the strength and loyalty of that army, and he could not entertain the idea that it should for even a single day, even the smallest part of it, be withdrawn from his command, or that it should give battle pursuant to orders emanating from any other authority than his own. Moreover, did he himself know what the march of events would lead him to do with regard to the fate of Spain? Joseph therefore met with a somewhat cool welcome; some few concessions were made to his pride, but none of them bore on his heart's desire,

and, after his return to Spain, matters went on as before, with but slight difference.

The birth of the King of Rome took place on the 20th of March. The whole of the Court, and all who held positions of any importance, had been summoned on the preceding evening, and spent the night in the rooms adjoining those of the Empress. For the greater part of those present, the birth of an heir to the Empire was, in a measure, a matter of personal interest, as it would give stability to the order of things in which their fortunes were bound up. At six o'clock in the morning, we were informed that labor had become suspended, that it was not known when the Empress would give birth to a child, and that we might all retire. The Empress was in actual danger, and she was nearing the point when it sometimes becomes necessary, in order to save the life of either mother or child, to sacrifice one of them. M. Dubois, an eminent surgeon, who had charge of the *accouchement*, had not concealed this fact from the Emperor. History must render Napoleon the justice of recording his answer, which became known at the time. "Behave, sir, as you would in the case of a peasant's wife."

Hardly an hour had elapsed from the time of my return to the préfecture, when I heard the first report of the cannon announcing that the Empress had been safely delivered of a child. When the twenty-second report was heard, the public joy revealed itself in the most lively and expansive fashion wherever the people congregated. A loud cry of "Long live the Emperor, the Empress, and the King of Rome!" arose in all directions. We therefore did not deceive the Emperor, when, on returning to the château, we conveyed to him the assurance that the happiness he felt was reciprocated by the inhabitants of the city of Paris.

From all I saw, Napoleon probably never experienced a

more happy day in this life. His physiognomy was irradiated with joy. He himself carried the child into the room wherein were assembled the most important members of his Court and Government. There was something touching and affectionate in his expression, which was not generally to be found there. The Emperor, it was plain, had given way to the father. Why did this victory of nature not endure longer?

The infant's baptism was set for June. In the interval, no event of any importance happened excepting the return of M. de Caulaincourt to France. He was leaving his post as ambassador at St. Petersburg, and as he had been a personal favorite with Alexander, his recall, or, to speak more in accordance with the language of the day, the leave of absence which had been granted him, was a sufficient indication that there was daily a little less anxiety to cultivate a good understanding between the two cabinets. It was patent to any one who could see beneath the surface of things, that the part the ambassador of France to Russia was henceforth destined to play, was to be one not at all in harmony with the one performed by the Duc de Vicence. His personal character was, moreover, too sincere and unbending for any hope to be entertained that the new attitude and language required could be obtained from it.

About the same period, M. Maret, Duc de Bassano, took the place, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of M. de Champagny, Duc de Cadore, who was appointed Minister without portfolio. M. de Bassano, while endowed with no less sincere zeal than his predecessor, felt positively enthusiastic over the genius of the master whom he served. It could be said of him that he had the same faith in Napoleon as the most fervent Catholic can have in the infallibility of the Church. To this impassioned devotion must be added a comprehensive intellect and a great aptitude for

work. So it is that no one ever constantly stood in such high favor, and, if his services were not always useful, they never for a single day ceased being agreeable.

M. Daru took his place as Minister of State. These changes, although they did not seem likely to affect me, had nevertheless a marked influence on my present status and the one to come. My very frequent intercourse with the Duc de Bassano did not suffer any interruption, and so, when visiting him at his official residence, I became acquainted with an entirely new set of people. I was in the habit of meeting there the principal personages of the Diplomatic Corps, I got a far better insight into the mysteries of the imperial policy, and I began to judge of it with more clear-sightedness, and, in consequence, with increased doubts and fears.

Far from taking any hold of me, the enthusiasm of the Duc de Bassano made me distrustful, for I perceived that owing to his ardent admiration of all his master's actions, he could no longer judge of matters correctly. The marriage of the Emperor with the Archduchess had dazzled him. He could no longer see any danger that could possibly threaten the fortunes of Napoleon. This was the wrong frame of mind for the man who ought to have made it his duty to collect and convey to his master every scrap of information likely to enlighten him, to have heard everything, to have listened to everything, for the man, finally, who was called upon to carry on the correspondence with the cabinet of St. Petersburg.

Few there were who could resist the prestige of the sovereign whose every action was crowned with success. I can only name two men in the following of M. Maret who did not share his illusions. One was M. de Sémonville, an old friend of M. Maret, and the other, Comte Louis de Narbonne, a returned *émigré*, one of the wittiest and most

brilliant members of the Court of Louis XVI., whose Minister he had been for a few months, in the opening days of the *Assemblée législative*. He had, in his youth, been a somewhat close friend of M. de Talleyrand, and after having at the outset of the Revolution drifted into almost the same line of opinion, Comte Louis, on his return to France, had not received from his former friend the help he had expected, so he was compelled to make his own way to the Emperor. He had known how to make himself most agreeable, and had become his *aide-de-camp*. Napoleon entrusted him with several diplomatic missions. All this combined had, while increasing the distance which separated him from M. de Talleyrand, brought him into somewhat close intimacy with M. Maret. This was equivalent to falling out with the former, for great was the opposition, not to say the hostility, between the former and present Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the world knows to what an extent the Duc de Bassano was persistently harassed by the sarcasms of the Prince of Benevento.

My former relations with M. de Sémonville (we had both been councillors in the Parlement) soon brought about an interchange of our thoughts and premonitions. His own were of a more sombre nature than mine, and I occasionally considered them rash, although I could hardly dispute their accuracy. The three of us then formed a small and intimate group in the *salons* of the Minister; we listened to and observed everything, and as we felt a sincere desire that matters should not reach a disastrous climax, we seized every opportunity to let the Duc de Bassano know the truth about things. But, he was so greatly under the sway of his illusions that there was no way of getting him to understand anything that was of a nature to weaken them.

Brilliant fêtes in connection with the christening of the King of Rome took place in Paris and at Saint-Cloud.



The Emperor had wished that they should coincide with the opening of the *Corps législatif*, an event which took place on the 16th of June. His speech on this occasion deserves notice, for he seldom had delivered a more haughty one, and never were his audacious encroachments more outspokenly avowed.

The reunion to the Empire of the Papal States, of Holland, of the Hanseatic provinces, and of the Valais was referred to in this speech as the consequent result of the necessity he found increasing his maritime resources, and separating the affairs of the Church from those of the Empire. "I have granted to the Popes," he said, with most derisive coolness, "palaces in Rome and in Paris. If they have the interests of religion at heart, they will often come and reside at the centre of affairs, and follow the example of Saint Peter, who preferred living in Rome to living in Holy Land." His speech concluded with a statement of the condition of affairs in Spain, where the insurgents had been defeated in a number of pitched battles, and where English blood had at last flown in a number of actions which reflected glory on the French armies. "When England is exhausted," he went on to say, "when she shall at last have been made to experience all the ills which she has for twenty years past inflicted on continental nations, when one half of her families will be in mourning, a bolt out of the skies will come and settle the Peninsular War, the fate of her armies, and avenge Europe and Asia, by ending this Second Punic War."

The history of those days, and especially of that extraordinary man, is nowhere better written than in these solemnly delivered words which read so strongly a few years later. If this language imposed on the greater number, what irritation and indignation must it not have aroused abroad among those who were not yet completely crushed,

and who felt that they were still able to show him some resistance? Hence is it to be wondered at that renewed efforts were finally made, with one common accord, from one end of Europe to the other, as soon as the day came when the possibility of overthrowing the conqueror began to be seen, and as soon as it became plain that fortune was deserting him?

This same month of June, in which the promulgation of which I have just given an extract appeared, witnessed several other events that I cannot pass in silence. Napoleon had made up his mind, following the result of the debates of the ecclesiastical commission and the answers he had received from it, to call together a national council. Letters of convocation had been sent out as early as the 25th of April, addressed to the French and Italian bishops. A deputation composed of the Bishops of Tours, Nantes, and Trèves, had started simultaneously to wait on the Pope, at Savona; its object was to announce this convocation, and to notify him that the Concordat of 1801 was no longer in force, owing to his refusal to conform to its essential clauses. They were to add that in future the bishops would be installed as previous to the Concordat, according to forms to be determined by the forthcoming council, and approved by the Emperor.

Still, if the delegates found the Pope in a conciliatory mood, they were authorized to treat with him, in which case two treaties would have to be agreed upon, each independent of the other. The first was to have reference to episcopal installation, and on this point the Emperor was willing to revert to the Concordat of 1801, but on two conditions, the first of these being that the Pope would install such bishops already appointed to sees, and the second, that in future the appointments should be submitted to the Pope in the usual form, for the purpose of obtaining canonical

installation; that, in case at the end of these three months, it had not been granted by His Holiness, the appointment was to be submitted to the Metropolitan, who was to *install* his suffragan, who in turn would equally have the power to *install*, even in the case of an archbishop.

The purport of the second agreement was the settlement of matters generally, and if, following upon this, the Pope consented to observe all the conditions mutually agreed upon, he might at will return to Rome or reside at Avignon, with full power to administer spiritual matters, and to even have about him resident representatives of the Christian powers. He would receive two millions for his maintenance, all of this, moreover, consequent upon his binding himself to exercise in the Empire no power that was contrary to the four articles of 1682. These points once settled, it was expected that many minor difficulties would soon be disposed of.

The delegates were also commanded to inform His Holiness, that under no circumstances would he again enter into temporal possession of Rome. They were also to warn him, that in case of his refusing to agree to the proposed arrangements, the Church of France in National Council assembled, would be free to act in conformity with the precedents established in bygone days, and inspired by the necessity of providing for the salvation of souls and the good of religion.

In order to be better accredited, the three bishops had armed themselves with a letter signed by several other bishops at a meeting held at the residence of Cardinal Fesch, and also with a private letter from this Cardinal. In their letter, the bishops entreated the Pope to place full confidence in the three delegates sent him, and the Cardinal entered into a rather detailed *exposé* of all the advantages which would accrue from his compliance with all the prop-

ositions which were to be submitted to him. He dwelt in particular fashion on those which would be of benefit to religion, and be experienced by the Churches of France and of Italy, viz.: The freedom and independence of the head of the Church, the return of the cardinals to the Court of His Holiness, a satisfactory revenue derived from landed property, the re-establishment of foreign missions, the presence of the Ministers of the several powers at the Court of His Holiness, an increase in the number of bishops, many increased facilities for the exercise of worship, and lastly, a liberal stipend for the ministers of religion.

The above were the precious benefits to which His Eminence called the attention of the Sovereign Pontiff, if he complied with Napoleon's propositions. Several other cardinals, archbishops, and bishops who were temporarily in Paris, also wrote privately to the Pope.

The delegates were under orders to return by the 1st of June. I will not enter into a detailed account of the negotiations which took place between them and the Pope at Savona. They found him angered, and were on the point of failing absolutely in their mission. But Pius VII. was moved with compassion for the sufferings of the Church. The letter of Cardinal Fesch had made a great impression on him, and, when everything seemed broken off, he decided on giving an oral approval to a memorandum of which he kept a duplicate, and which contained the following conventions:—

“Taking into consideration the needs and desires of the Churches of France and of Italy, etc., he would grant canonical installation to Napoleon's appointees, according to the forms prescribed at the time of the concordats of France and of the Kingdom of Italy. He was prepared to extend by means of a new concordat, the same conditions to the Churches of Tuscany, Parma, and Piacenza. He

consented to the insertion into the concordats of a clause by which he bound himself to deliver bulls of installation to the bishops appointed by the Emperor or by the King, within a period to be determined, which period was not to be less than six months, and in case such installation was withheld for longer than six months, for other reasons than the personal unworthiness of the appointees, he would invest with the power of delivering bulls in his name the Metropolitan of the vacant see, and failing him, the senior Metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province. However, he had only determined to make these concessions in the hope which the bishops had led him to entertain, that they would pave the way to arrangements which would re-establish peace and order in the Church, and would restore to the Holy See the independence and dignity appertaining to it. The various arrangements having relation to Church discipline and the exercise of pontifical authority were to form the subjects of special treaty for the negotiation of which His Holiness was disposed to entertain propositions, as soon as his freedom and his counsellors were restored to him."

It was on the 19th of May that this memorandum was accepted as satisfactory by the episcopal delegates, who, rejoicing at so unexpected a success, hastened to return to Napoleon, whom they flattered themselves they could prevail upon to feel the advantage there would be in remaining content with that convention, the frank acceptance of which might render the holding of the council unnecessary. But matters had progressed too far, as the bishops convoked had already come together. Besides, the Pope's consent was merely a verbal one, he had not signed any document, and the Emperor indulged in the hope of obtaining from the council decrees which would provide a remedy for his embarrassments in a much more certain fashion. He also enjoyed the idea that the holding of a council was a conspic-



uous event which should not be lacking to his reign, and he doubtless fondly imagined that it would not be much more difficult to direct and govern such an assembly than his *Corps législatif*.

The opening of the council took place in the archiepiscopal palace of Paris, on the 17th of June. Cardinal Fesch claimed the presidency over it, as the privilege of his archiepiscopal see of Lyons, and as Primate of all Gaul. There was much to be said against this, and there were well-founded objections to this claim, which was finally allowed. The Fathers of the council, to the number of eighty-seven, of whom thirty-one were Italians,<sup>1</sup> went in procession to Notre-Dame, and there heard mass, which was celebrated by Cardinal Fesch with great pomp.

The Bishop of Troyes, Abbé of Boulogne, preached the sermon; the Bishop of Nantes announced the decree opening the council, from the pulpit, and read the declaration of faith of the Council of Trent. The president then repeated aloud the oath prescribed in 1564 by the bull of Pius IV., and the other prelates took the same oath at his hands. These proceedings greatly displeased the Emperor. He was considerably displeased with the sermon, in which the Bishop of Troyes had spoken far too much of the Roman Church, "the mother and sovereign of all Churches, etc." The oath also was very distasteful to him, as it began with the words "I swear and promise faithful obedience to the Roman Pontiff, etc." However, he was given to understand that this was a matter of form which need not cause

<sup>1</sup> Thirty-three Italian bishops had not been convoked, either because they were in prison or in exile, or owing to their old age and their infirmities. Of the Roman bishops but one had been summoned; in France, there was only one who had not been summoned, and that was the Bishop of Séz. The Emperor, who was dissatisfied with his principles, had compelled him to resign and to live out of his diocese; yet it could not be denied that he remained the titular bishop, his resignation not having been accepted by the Pope, and as such, he had the right to be present at the council.

him any annoyance. But fresh difficulties soon made their appearance. Napoleon sent his Minister of Public Worship to read to the council a decree whereby he approved of Cardinal Fesch as its president, and which enacted that a committee should be created for the purpose of regulating the proceedings of the assembly, of which bureau the Ministers of Public Worship of France and Italy were to be members.

The unexpected apparition of the Minister and the claims arising out of the decree of which he was the bearer, caused great perturbation. In the early centuries, the Christian Emperors were indeed in the habit of sending to the councils one or two commissioners with the object of preserving order; but, for ages past, the care of this had exclusively been left to those who presided over them. When attempting to revive such a usage, the Emperor was but too plainly making manifest his desire of influencing the decisions, and it was not a good means of reaching the object he had in view.

Cardinal Fesch moved that the prelates whom he had previously commissioned to police the assembly should constitute the bureau, but his motion failed to find acceptance, so, at the request of the Bishop of Ghent, M. de Broglie, the council proceeded with making a fresh selection of prelates. The Minister of Public Worship next read a message from Napoleon, who complained bitterly of the Pope's refusal to grant bulls of installation to the bishops he (the Emperor) had appointed, of the briefs issued by him against installations by the Chapters, of the bull of excommunication which His Holiness had issued, and of certain extraordinary powers granted to Cardinal di Pietro, and wherein he declared that the Concordat having been violated and no longer extant, a new method must be found for canonical installations, and that the council was the proper body to determine upon the one most suitable.

This message created consternation among the Fathers of the council, who had, up to that time, hoped to bring about a reconciliation between the two parties, and who were most anxious to see this hope realized. From that moment, discouragement and a sentiment of distrust reigned among them. Those prelates who passed as being more particularly attached to the Emperor, became, from the mere fact, objects of suspicion to their colleagues, and whatever might be the rectitude of their intentions, they lost almost all consideration. This feeling of hostility was directed in a particular fashion against the man who by his virtues, his lights, and talents, was best in a position to render valuable services, the Bishop of Nantes, M. Duvoisin. He endeavored, on the following day, to read in reply to the message, an address wherein was dealt with at length the question of excommunication. Its tenor was attacked by the Bishop of Ghent, and the part having reference to the excommunication underwent a change. In lieu of dealing with the particular issue, it was agreed that one should remain content with laying down general principles. Certain passages relating to the four articles of 1682 and the liberties of the Gallican Church met with strenuous opposition at the hands of the Italian prelates, which went so far as to take the shape of a protest which was presented by the Bishop of Brescia, and signed by several of his colleagues. The Bishop of Chambéry moved that the council should proceed in a body to Saint-Cloud, and demand the freedom of the Holy Father. This proposition was at first welcomed with the liveliest enthusiasm, and was on the point of being adopted, when the majority drew back before the fear of entering into a discussion with Napoleon, and rejected a measure which would have honored the council in the eyes of the man himself to whom it would have most given offence.

In the end, the address was adopted, after everything had been eliminated from it which had reference to the ex-communication. Napoleon declined to receive it in its modified form, and ordered that the bishops were to give their attention at once to the object for which they had been convened, *i.e.* the methods to be substituted for the papal bulls with regard to the installation of bishops.

I do not believe that Napoleon, in any circumstance of his life, so little understood the position and character of the men with whom he had to deal. It was evident that in those days he found himself without such counsellors as were able to correct the false ideas which swayed his mind in this connection. The Minister of Public Worship, M. Bigot de Préameneu, a worthy man, but weak and timid, was incapable of taking any stand and firmly defending his position. At the time of the conclusion of the Concordat, M. Portalis, who then was Minister of Public Worship, possessed all the general knowledge and talents necessary to exercise a salutary influence, and it was also the time when M. de Talleyrand still exercised great influence. There is no cause, therefore, for surprise if matters were conducted differently in 1801 and in 1811.

It was nevertheless necessary that the council should pronounce itself on the question last set by the Government. The Archbishop of Tours read the report drawn up in this connection, at the end of the preceding year by the ecclesiastical commission, and concluded by giving some particulars of what had recently occurred at Savona. He submitted the memorandum orally approved of by the Pope, and which up to that time had been studiously kept in the background. The absence of any signature to it was quickly noticed, and it was agreed that this memorandum, in that it did not bear any character of authenticity, could not be taken into consideration. It was in vain that Car-

dinal Fesch produced a letter from the Pope, wherein His Holiness highly praised the behavior of the delegates, and begged the Cardinal to place faith in what they might say on his behalf, the majority of the council steadfastly persisted in looking upon the memorandum as forced from the Holy Father's good nature, and containing, not conceptions irrevocably granted, but the mere bases of an understanding.

In order to bring the discussion to an end, Cardinal Fesch made a proposition which met with a unanimous reception. This motion was to the effect that previous to rendering any decision with regard to the questions submitted to them, it should beg leave of His Majesty to send a deputation to the Pope, with the object of laying before him the deplorable condition of the Churches, and of conferring with him as to the best remedial measures to be adopted. On hearing of this resolve, Napoleon was on the point of immediately dissolving the council. He had made up his mind to have a decree issued which would compel Metropolitans to install bishops. But he was dissuaded from this *coup d'État* by the Bishop of Nantes, and he contented himself with a decree which was to be promulgated by the council itself (he having dictated it), and which should be couched in the following terms:—

“1. — Under all circumstances, no episcopal see shall remain vacant for over a year. The appointment, installation, and consecration shall take place within that time; 2. — The Emperor shall appoint to all vacant sees, in conformity with the terms of the Concordat; 3. — The Pope shall grant canonical installation six months after the appointment; 4. — At the expiration of these six months, the Metropolitan shall become invested by the very fact of the concession made by the Pope, and shall proceed with the canonical installation and the consecration; 5. — The pres-



ent decree will be submitted to the approval of the Emperor, and incorporated with the laws of the state; 6. — The council will beg His Majesty to permit a deputation of bishops to visit the Pope, to thank him for having by his concessions put an end to the evils of the Church."

The angry passions aroused in the council by the reading of this decree assumed a violent character which nobody had anticipated. At first, the Bishop of Nantes succeeded in getting it almost unanimously adopted by the committee; but, on the following morning, a lively opposition manifested itself in the same committee; there were many withdrawals, and in the end the proposed measure was adopted on the express condition that "the decree, before becoming law, should have the sanction of the Sovereign Pontiff." Matters became more strained when the report of the committee was read by the Bishop of Tournay to the council. The Bishop of Nantes and the Archbishop of Tours had declined to take charge of the matter.

Great was the confusion which followed this reading. Debate was thereupon resumed as to the jurisdiction of the council, and the extent of the powers appertaining to the Pope. Some there were who argued that he had exceeded his powers when issuing the bull of excommunication. At these words, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, casting on the table a copy of the decisions of the Council of Trent, open at the particular passage giving Popes the right to excommunicate sovereigns, of whatever rank, in case of their laying hands on the rights and privileges of the Church, exclaimed: "Condemn the Church at once!" This action produced the greatest excitement, and it was difficult to foresee what might happen next, when Cardinal Fesch adjourned the sitting, alleging as a reason for so doing that time should be given each one to think over so serious a matter. The same evening, Napoleon decreed the dissolu-

tion of the council. This was on the 10th of July. In vain did Cardinal Fesch point out to him in every conceivable way the bad effect which such a measure would produce; he was not listened to, nay, more, he was accused by his nephew of secretly favoring the plans of the opposition.

The Emperor was not satisfied with this display of his authority. He had flattered himself that the council would help him to do without the Pope. Deceived in this expectation, and attributing this failure to a great extent to the Bishops of Tournay and of Troyes, and to M. de Broglie, Bishop of Ghent, who was also one of his chaplains, he gave orders to the Duc de Rovigo to arrest them and to confine them in a state prison, which orders were carried out the very same night.

I received, on this important occasion, the fullest confirmation of the assurance given to me that political police operations should be left entirely in the hands of the Minister of Police. In fact, I did not know of the present one until next day when it had been completely carried out. The Duc de Rovigo had sent at midnight for inspector-general Veyrat, who, with two officers chosen by him and belonging to the Ministry of Police, had arrested the three bishops, and conveyed them to Vincennes. On my being informed next morning that M. Veyrat had been absent for the greater part of the night, I asked him to give an account of himself, whereupon he told me in most naïve fashion all the particulars of his expedition. In spite of his natural roughness, he had not been able to remain unmoved, when called upon to lay hands, so to speak, on such venerable personages, and his narrative still bore traces of his emotion. Two of the prelates, the Bishops of Tournay and of Ghent, had impressed him with the dignity of their demeanor and the calmness of their resignation.

Although I was at that time far from being on an intimate footing with the Minister of Police, I was nevertheless beginning to feel more at ease with him, and I could not resist telling him that such violent measures seemed to me likely to produce an unpleasant effect. He almost admitted as much, and the proof of it must have been very great to extort such an admission from him. He gave me to understand that he had prevented others being included in this measure of coercion, and that he had personally rescued the Archbishop of Bordeaux from a like fate, a fact of which I have since received confirmation. This was the first time that I realized that the Duc de Rovigo was not altogether insensible to councils of prudence and moderation. Moreover, it would have been difficult to discover, even among those most devoted to the Emperor, many who approved of what he had just done.

It was considered outrageous that prelates called upon to express their opinion, should be arrested for availing themselves of the faculty granted them. Fears of a schism began to be entertained, especially when it became known that it was the intention of Napoleon to have the *Corps législatif* pass a law which would determine the methods governing episcopal installation. Those prelates who were most attached to him, and those who enjoyed his confidence to some extent, were not among those least alarmed, so they set everything in motion to ward off so great a peril. The members of the recently dissolved council were, at their suggestion, summoned in succession into the presence of the Minister of Public Worship, who gave them to understand that the steps just taken might be recalled, if they would give their adhesion to the proposed decree. Some of them remained unshaken; the others, to the number of about eighty, promised their acceptance of it, if, as was promised them, the Emperor would on his part consent to submit the decree to the approval of the Pope.

After many parleys and negotiations, the decree of dissolution was finally declared null and void, and the council met once more on the 5th of August just as though it had never been dissolved. Nevertheless, the bishops who had been arrested were still behind bolts and bars,<sup>1</sup> and several others had taken their departure. In faith, what could henceforth be the character of the decisions of an assembly so harrassed and so mutilated? Could it be expected that its actions would have any great or real authority? However this might be, following upon a few more animated discussions, wherein the Archbishop of Bordeaux persisted in his opposition, the council rendered two decrees, the one to the effect that the council was competent to enact a law with regard to the installation of bishops, *in cases of necessity*; the second bore reference to the same installation, and differed little from the projected law of the Emperor, the only exception being its last article, which was couched as follows: "The first decree shall be submitted to the approval of the Pope." To that end, the Emperor is "to be begged to allow a deputation of six members to wait upon His Holiness, to obtain the confirmation of a decree which alone can put an end to the evils afflicting the Churches of France and Italy."

The delegates reached Savona towards the end of August.

M. de Pradt, the appointed Archbishop of Mechlin, was one of them. In order to inspire the Pope with a little more confidence in him, Napoleon had consented to five cardinals and an archbishop *in partibus*, who was his chap-

<sup>1</sup> In order to weaken the bad effect produced by the arrest of the bishops, and the fact that they were still kept in close confinement, it was noised abroad that they had not been arrested on account of the opinions they had expressed, but for reasons not germane to the matters submitted to the council. This falsehood, which did not deceive anybody, has nevertheless been reproduced by M. de Las Cases, in the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*. It is sufficient contradiction of it to point out that the *clôture* of the council and the arrests were ordered to take place at one and the same time.

lain in ordinary, to go on this visit. It was therefore in their presence, and assisted by their counsels that the Holy Father entered into a series of conferences with the delegated bishops. These conferences lasted about three weeks, and on the 20th of September he finally consented to grant a brief by which he confirmed the decree of the council, but without mentioning the council by name, merely contenting himself with adopting, "as in conformity with his views and his desires, the articles agreed upon by the bishops assembled in Paris," which articles were quoted in their entirety. The brief opened with congratulations addressed to these assembled bishops on their attachment to the Chair of St. Peter. They were specially commended for their filial submission, and their genuine obedience to the Holy See and to the Roman Church, the mother and sovereign of all others. Then came a final exhortation that they should always seek advice of the Holy See, as the centre of Catholic unity, and ever remain submissive and invisibly attached to it.

The brief having been settled, the delegation took advantage of the apparently conciliatory frame of mind of His Holiness, to beg him to make certain alterations with regard to points which had so far prevented their being made public, in the bulls already granted to the Archbishop of Mechlin. They likewise begged him to grant the necessary bulls of installation to save the bishops recently appointed. The alterations were made as they wished them, and bulls were forwarded to four of the appointed bishops.

The Holy Father wrote an autograph letter to Napoleon. This letter was couched in terms of the greatest moderation. Thereupon, the delegates, firm in the belief that they could congratulate themselves upon the success of their mission, feeling confident that the captivity of the Pope was about



to cease, and with it all the ills of the Church, hastened to write to Paris to inform the Government of so happy a result. And, indeed, everything seemed settled satisfactorily, and they were authorized to return, but this order was almost immediately countermanded. Several of them had already left Savona, when the second messenger reached the place. The Archbishop of Tours, and the Bishops of Nantes and of Trèves, who were still at a short distance from the city, hastened to return to it. The Archbishop of Mechlin and the Bishop of Evreux could not be caught up with, and reached Paris, where, in lieu of the congratulations to which they had looked forward, they had to listen to reprimands. The reason of this change is the following one. A committee of the Council of State, entrusted with the examination of the brief concerning the decree of the council, had been of the opinion that it should be rejected, its decision being based on the fact that as the Pope did not mention the council by name in his brief, he thus appeared as ignoring its authority, and also for the reason that he had not expressed himself in a formal fashion with regard to the bishoprics of the Kingdom of Italy and those of the various countries already forming part and those likely to form part of the Empire.

Napoleon, struck by these remarks, came to the conclusion that the delegates had completely ignored their instructions, and expressed his liveliest displeasure in this connection to the two delegates who had returned. Still, he did not see fit to send them back to Savona, but concluding not to make any use of the brief, he enjoined those who had remained with or returned to the Pope, to make fresh efforts to have the brief altered in conformity with the instructions which they had received in the first instance.

The whole winter was consumed in fruitless endeavors to obtain these fresh concessions from His Holiness, who

remained firm in his resolve not to alter the brief in any form; and, at the end of several months, the delegates considered themselves fortunate in at last obtaining permission to return to Paris. Thus was the result derived from the council rendered altogether fruitless, after it had been brought into existence with so much ostentation. Napoleon, wanting everything or nothing, would not even permit any use to be made of the bulls which the appointed bishops had received, forbade them to have themselves consecrated, yet nevertheless compelled them to take up their residences in their dioceses, and to govern them as administrators by virtue of powers conferred upon them as such by the Chapters, thus placing them in a most difficult and false position.

I must not omit stating that some four months after the arrest of the Bishops of Tournay, Ghent, and Troyes, they had been asked, while confined at Vincennes, to tender their resignations, as the price of which their prison doors were to be unlocked, and it would merely be required of them that they should reside under police supervision, in such cities of the Empire which they might select, provided they were at a distance of forty leagues from the city. All three accepted this proposition, resigned, and were sent to the towns they had chosen.

I have given all the more space to presenting as a whole the facts and incidents connected with the council of 1811, for the reason that, in spite of its extreme interest, the events which followed have diverted attention from it. Seldom has it happened that so much infatuation has been shown in recognizing that there are limits beyond which even absolution cannot go. Taking it for granted that all men and all assemblies could be governed in the same fashion, by wishing to carry everything in a high-handed way and stop short at nothing, the Emperor did not profit by positive advantages which had been obtained against

all probability. Following upon his rough methods in his treatment of the council, and after being powerless to extort anything from it by force or fear, what more unheard-of piece of good fortune than that of having obtained from the Pope the brief having reference to episcopal installation? No one before him could boast of such a concession. It was all that was needed to render secure the proper government of dioceses, and completely marked the dividing line between the spiritual and temporal power. Even admitting, which was very likely, that the Pope would some day wish to recall his concession, it was sufficient that it had existed and that it had been profited by for a period of time, to make this recall very difficult for him. Was it not likewise plain that it would not be an easy matter to deny the Italian dioceses that which had been granted to the French ones?

Napoleon's line of action on this occasion was impolitic. The restorer of Catholic worship in France, the Church owed to him that it had risen from its ruins, and asked for nothing better than to be allowed to go over to him completely. From the Pope, down to the least important members of the clergy, all, with very few exceptions, accepted his dynasty without any mental reservation, and all of them believed it lay in his power to do more for them than could anybody else. Everything combines to convince me that had he adopted a less violent line of action, it would have been an easy matter for him to find in religion the most useful and powerful ally. He sought to guard and even to exaggerate the liberties of the Gallican Church, and this attempt had the same result as the one to increase beyond all bounds the limits of the Empire. He ended with not being able to secure to France her old frontiers, and he delivered us almost defenceless over to the ultramontane spirit, and the encroachments of the papal power.

## CHAPTER XXI

The gambling-house lease — Accusations brought against M. de Rovigo — A committee of investigation appointed in the matter — New regulations governing gambling-houses — M. Pasquier and the Duc de Rovigo — The harvest of 1811 — System adopted with regard to the distribution of bread — Necessity for protective measures against the dishonesty of bakers and consumers — The reserve stock of provisions placed under official control — Bread becomes scarce — Gradual increase in the price of articles of food — Napoleon's desire to re-establish a "maximum" law — His distrust of merchants — M. Pasquier's propositions to the *Comité des subsistances* — Official report of the proceedings of the extraordinary council held at the Emperor's, with a view of warding off distress — Riots and pillaging by famished bands — Severe measures of repression — The price of wheat determined by law.

IN the last months of 1811, I became involved in a case which created no little stir. I can the less remain silent about it because it affected an important question of public morals and order, and that it almost compromised the position of the Duc de Rovigo.

The lease of the games of chance, after running for some years, had expired several months before; it had been renewed, but for a year only, on the same terms as in the past, the Minister of Police wishing for time to consider the bases of the new agreement he would be called upon to sign. Convinced as I was of the harm done by the gambling-tables of Paris, I thought it my duty to call the Emperor's attention to the matter, so I sent to him, in September, the subjoined memorandum. I give it in its entirety because it shows the matter in its full light: —

The love of gambling is a moral disease, and requires treating in the same way as physical ailments, which there is no hope of conquering, but the effects of which one seeks as much as possible to curtail, and which one labors especially to prevent from becoming contagious. Now, this is not the course that has been pursued for the past fifteen years. During this period, we have started from a principle which, to say the least, is very specious. It is impossible, it has been argued, to extirpate the passion for gambling, hence it becomes necessary to induce those who are a prey to it, to gamble in a quasi public resort, under the eyes of the authorities who can exercise a supervision over their actions, restrain them in their wildest follies, and even turn aside men whose means do not allow them to indulge in such a passion, without its entailing upon them the most fearful consequences.

To attain this object, two, three, or at most four houses would have been sufficient, but as many as fourteen, including the *salon des étrangers*,<sup>1</sup> have been opened, owing to the fact that no sooner did the profit derived therefrom become openly recognized as a source of revenue, than it was treated in the same way as others. As it seemed that there was nothing better to do than to increase this profit the moment it decreased through this tax being levied on a certain class of men only, the attempt has been made to induce another class to contribute towards it.

So it has come about that for a certain time, society's idlers, contractors, generals, and all men who had become enriched during the Revolution, alone frequented the gambling-houses. Little by little these individuals were ruined, or saw the sources of their odious fortune dry up, or, held back from a certain sense of decency arising from the regular habits rigorously demanded by His Majesty of men called upon to serve him or to come into contact with him. Gambling-houses were therefore opened for merchants, clerks, for the masses, and for servants. Instead of stakes in *écus*, *louis*, and bank-notes, came stakes of forty and even fifteen sous. Gambling-houses were opened in all directions, in parts of the town where none had previously existed, as for instance in the very centre of trade, in the rue Saint-Martin. This crime was indeed a productive one, but then what are not the evils which have resulted from it! The disease, which was previously confined to one class of society, has invaded the mass of the population; a fearful amount of corruption has invaded the

<sup>1</sup> There remain but eleven of them nowadays.



domain of morality, and the number of crimes has sensibly increased. Gambling is so much the source of these troubles, that when a theft of any importance is committed in a dwelling-house, the first care of the police is to enquire if there resides in it any individual frequenting gambling-houses, and if it discovers a single one so situated, it seldom errs in laying hands on him.

What other remedy is there for so appalling an evil but to revert to a system which should have never been abandoned? Three or four gambling-houses are more than sufficient for society's idlers, who, if they did not gamble in public resorts, would do so in private houses and perhaps at greater risk, and for the foreigners, who are, almost to a man, consumed with the gambling mania, and who thus become confined to a single house, to the great convenience of the police, which has to exercise supervision over them.

It is all the more necessary to have such an outlet, which, if blocked, would drive the votaries of the green cloth into society, where they would quickly propagate their fatal malady. And, this is the place to confess to a strange truth: gambling-houses, which have developed the gambling mania in the middle and in the lower classes, have been the means of checking it among respectable people. The reason for this is plain. Gambling does not go on in private houses, because there are public gambling-houses wherein a willing partner is always at hand and on the other hand, people blush somewhat at the idea of entering these. A man occupying a judicial position would not dare to be seen in such places, while a military man, when entering them, goes so far as to remove his Cross of Honor. Hence there is no objection, nay, it is even beneficial, to license three or four gambling-houses of a high order; but, this concession made, all others must be absolutely closed.

It may safely be stated that nothing would prove more acceptable to the respectable portion of Parisians, and the adoption of the foregoing system would not be liable to the objection already mentioned. Tradespeople are not in the habit of gambling in their own circle, and they will cease gambling, when they will no longer have any gambling-houses at their very doors. This is still more true with regard to the masses. Should they be desirous of gambling after the houses to which they now resort are closed, they could indulge in their mania only in resorts which the police is ever watching, *i.e.* in pot-houses and in rooms hired for the occasion, and so forth.

The rich have *salons* into which it is difficult to gain admittance; but supervision can always be exercised with ease over the poor, for

their places of meeting are necessarily public resorts. The Prefect of Police, should the idea which he now submits be carried out, has no hesitancy in guaranteeing that ere three months had elapsed, there would no longer be any gambling among the lower classes, and but very little of it among the *bourgeoisie* (middle class). Such a result would be most beneficial to the Parisian population. Doubtless the money derived from the lease will be considerably less; but, if it became necessary to substitute some tax to compensate for the loss of this source of revenue, which is the tax which would not be preferable? Is there a tax, the collecting of which is more expensive? Does any exist, the consequences of which afford greater cause for dread?

I was still in ignorance regarding the effect produced on the Emperor by the foregoing memorandum, when an incident occurred which gave increased importance to it. One Davelouis, who had repeatedly been a lessee of games of chance, sent in a tender to the Duc de Rovigo, the highest of all those received. But, for all that, the Minister seemed to favor the one made by one Perrin, the latest lessee, and it was said that a verbal understanding had been come to. Angered at seeing himself ousted, M. Davelouis at once attributed the preference granted to his competitor to dishonorable personal motives, and, with the aid of one Thurot, formerly a police secretary under M. Fouché, and a man of great intelligence, but at the same time hardly worthy of confidence, he had drawn up a memorandum for the eye of the Emperor, wherein were revealed all the infamies attendant upon the farming out of the games of chance; it embodied besides the most serious accusations against the Duc de Rovigo.

The latter, on hearing of this, sought to get possession of the memorandum and to arrest its author, so at least Davelouis has stated; but having, he claims, received timely warning, he made good his escape just as the Minister's officers were knocking at his door. It was at night. He

immediately fled to Saint-Cloud, spent the night in the park, and at daybreak called upon the Secretary of State, M. Daru, to whom he stated his case, requesting him to lay it before the Emperor. M. Daru consented to do so, and was instructed to send Davelouis back to Paris, with the order to produce his memorandum within forty-eight hours. The Duc de Rovigo was peremptorily forbidden from interfering with his freedom. This was hard for the Minister of Police to endure. In addition to this, he had to listen to the cruel expressions of an anger which hardly knew what control meant.

The Emperor, after reading the report of Davelouis, appointed a committee to investigate the facts, and to deliver an opinion on the following points: 1. — Is it proper and advisable to authorize games of chance in the city of Paris, or are they to be suppressed, and Paris placed, in this respect, on the same footing as other towns in France? 2. — Have the measures taken in various towns of France to suppress gambling been successful? What is the state of affairs in this connection? The committee was composed of the five presidents of committees of the Council of State, the Prefect of the Seine, and the Prefect of Police. At its first sitting, I was entrusted with the preliminaries and selected to be its reporter. The Duc de Rovigo could not help feeling alarmed at this selection; he did not think I entertained any friendly sentiments towards him, and feared that I might still bear the recollection of all the annoyances he had up to that time subjected me to.

The suppression of games of chance was what was uppermost in my mind, and so I gave little thought to private bickerings. I placed before the commission the result of my enquiries as to the great progress and of games of chance in the capital, and the consequences of this deplorable encroachment. I also demonstrated how the two most

important cities of France, Lyons and Bordeaux, had preserved themselves from this evil, and how much cause they had to congratulate themselves over having done so; then, referring to the concluding remarks of my memorandum to the Emperor, I ended by proving the absolute necessity of suppressing all gambling-houses whose avowed object was to draw the middle and lower classes.

With regard to the personal grievances of M. Davelouis, and to the alleged infringements of his rights, I called attention to the fact that the Emperor had, when ordering a searching investigation, insisted on the profound secrecy of our doings. Now, this second command necessarily did away with the first, as such an investigation would necessitate the taking of testimony, and an inspection of the books having reference to the farming of the games of chance. In conclusion, I dwelt on the little importance of this private quarrel by the side of the all-important question engaging our attention.

The committee, impressed with the documentary evidence I laid before it, ended by unanimously demanding the total suppression of gambling in Paris. I drew up my report, and presented it in person to the Emperor, who kept it by him for some length of time, without announcing what action he would take.

I have no doubt that at first Napoleon was in favor of the sweeping change recommended by the committee, but the dread of losing an important source of revenue soon filled his thoughts, disinterestedness not being his dominant quality. Nevertheless, I persist in believing that if the committee had gone no further than my first conclusions, it would have been difficult for him not to adopt them; but the proposition of an absolute suppression led him to temporize, and, after a while, he gave orders that an experiment should be made. The Duc de Rovigo was instructed to

grant a lease to Perrin, the actual lessee, but for one year only. Three houses were closed, instead of three only being left open, as I had expressed the desire. Those most dangerous, those in the trade centre, were suppressed. The hours of the forenoon during which gambling was permitted were curtailed one half, and the houses were compelled to close somewhat earlier at night. After a year's trial, the new system apparently gave such satisfaction that it was resolved to let it remain in force. The Emperor was at the time absorbed with the war against Russia, and had no time to give any attention to such a matter.

Meanwhile, the Duc de Rovigo had been consumed with anxiety. He had become a Minister far too recently to be in a position to treat with contempt so grave an accusation as the one preferred by Davelouis. Many persons among those approaching the Emperor, were only too favorably inclined to place faith in it; he had few friends, and many enemies. Had the committee paid any attention to the imputations laid before it, it is very likely that the Emperor would have dismissed him, and would have given him a far-off army command. But, what would have been gained by this, and who can tell what kind of a man his successor would have been? Newcomers are always to be dreaded in a position such as he occupied, because they may safely be credited with a most natural eagerness to give proofs of a zeal the effects of which are always somewhat roughly felt. In the case of the Duc de Rovigo, he had passed that period; it was therefore good policy not to seek to crush him. We all of us on this committee understood this perfectly, without there being any necessity for us to exchange a word over the matter, and the report was drawn up in consequence. Having once escaped this danger, it is fair to say that the Duc de Rovigo showed himself truly grateful to those who had rescued him from it,



and this feeling was particularly shown to me, to whom he believed himself to be more particularly indebted. From that time, his manner towards me underwent a total change, and there was no longer any friction between us. In the course of a conversation I had with him, he did not conceal that he fully appreciated my behavior in the matter. "You can see very well now," I remarked, "that I do not aspire to become Minister of Police, and you may rest assured that nothing could ever induce me to accept the post. You may therefore act in consequence, for you will seldom meet with a Prefect of Police in the same frame of mind."

A few days later, I let him know how disagreeable were to me the visits which M. Demarest was continually paying me, as I could not look upon them as anything else but a means of espionage employed against me and those who frequented my house. These visits ceased at once, and were never renewed. My influence on the mind of the Duc de Rovigo went on apace from that time, and I may say that this influence had something to do with the moderation of which he gave proof during the last two years in which he held office. He must be given his due. He lacked neither intelligence nor genius, but he never would allow, when *aide-de-camp* to Bonaparte, any objection to be raised to the will of the sovereign whose every step he followed and in whose atmosphere he breathed. When he became Minister of Police, his habits had to undergo a change. He only came into contact with Napoleon as did other ministers; he no longer went with him on his journeys, and worked much less frequently with him. Compelled to see a new set of people, and to keep house on a grand scale, having now to read letters in which truth was necessarily to be found occasionally, he reached much quicker than could be expected of him the conclusion that there were at times objections to and changes to be made in the com-

mands of his master. Enlightened as to the faults of the one whom he had until then looked upon as infallible, the forced confidant of the hatreds which he was arousing, his duties as Minister of Police, as they gradually revealed themselves to him to their fullest extent, opened his eyes. He understood that there was no longer anything to be gained by him in playing the part of agent of the misdeeds of another, which he had enacted so far. He began to argue with himself that there might be some danger in defying for too long a time the feelings of resentment which could not fail to break out against him, if ever the hand that upheld him began to lose its strength. He was therefore glad that a feeling of confidence had sprung up between us in succession to the distrust of former days. We were about to pass through difficult times.

The harvest of 1811 had bid fair to be a plentiful one, and as late as June, the best hopes had been entertained. The system adopted with regard to the sale of bread was based on its price being kept at a reasonable figure, so that it should always be within the means of the poorest consumer. When the price of cereals rose, the administration had to come to the bakers' assistance, either by supplying them with flour at a price in proportion with that of bread, or with money sufficient to make good the difference.

The burden was a very heavy one for the administration. If it had no stocks laid by, it was compelled to make purchases at the highest figures, and resell at a low price; and, by this transaction, it necessarily helped in raising the price, a thing with which it had nevertheless to contend.

At all events, the expense of meeting so great a consumption was enormous, and, in order that it should increase beyond bounds, it became imperative to guard against dishonest practices, especially those of the bakers themselves. Did they receive the quantity of flour they required, they

would seek to get more than this, and then dispose of this surplus at current rates; did they receive a pecuniary compensation, this last method was objectionable in that it rendered them altogether indifferent as to the price they paid for flour, and that often they even succeeded, by coming to an understanding with the sellers, to give it a fictitious rise, in order to obtain then a more considerable compensation.

Next to the dishonest practices of the bakers were those of the consumers, ever a prey to the fear of want, and asking for over and above their needs, sometimes even supplying with the overplus which they succeeded in obtaining the villages in the neighborhood of the capital, thus carrying on a most lucrative trade at the expense of the administration. Again, the administration had to protect itself against the many persons who daily flocked into the capital, especially against those who brought provisions to meet the other needs of the capital; it was necessary in so far as possible, and this was not an easy matter, to prevent them taking away in return not only the bread necessary for their own consumption, but also that with which they intended to supply to some extent the villages and towns to which they were going back.

The fine appearance presented by the crops quickly faded away in many of the provinces. Yet, in those nearest to the capital, those of Brie, Beauce, of nearly the whole of Picardy, the harvest was still a good one; but what was needed was that the surplus of this yield should make good the deficit in the Northern and in the Southern provinces, where the harvest was a very poor one.

No sooner was this state of things known, than the departments most favored by a good harvest made large calls, and these departments were precisely those from which the provisioning of the city is generally drawn, and,

as early as the month of August, I was compelled to call the attention of the Minister of the Interior, M. de Montalivet, to a condition of things which was daily growing worse. At the beginning of September, he took the wise precaution of forming a *comité de subsistances* (committee on food supplies), which was to consider the measures best to adopt. I was appointed on this committee together with M. Frochet, M. Réal, and M. Maret, Councillor of State. The last named had for some length of time past had charge of the provisioning of the army in time of war, and since about eighteen months, the Emperor had entrusted him with the reserve provisioning belonging to the city of Paris.

What was at that time the amount of that reserve stock? A contract had been entered into in 1807 with a firm styled the "Compagnie Paulet"; the principal member of it was, I believe, one M. Vanlenbergh, a prominent and able corn factor. This firm, which was compelled to always have in stock 300,000 *quintaux métriques* of wheat, had to co-operate with the trade in provisioning the city of Paris. It was bound to send to market, on a requisition from the prefect, and to sell at current rates, all the grain and flour demanded by such requisition. On such occasions, it was bound to replace in its depots the quantities just sold, and to do it by means of purchases made beyond a radius of thirty leagues about the capital, or abroad, when feasible.

Out of the reserve stock thus organized, were supplied the hospitals, the prisons, and the charitable institutions. This furnished an outlet and use for its grain and flour, as the need of a renewal of the stock gradually made itself felt. It would seem that of recent years the market had been all on the side of the contractors. The Emperor always fell into the error of considering that large returns were a kind of robbery of the state, and he never ceased laboring to curtail them. It is thus that he saw fit to do

on this occasion with the Compagnie Paulet, whose contract was cancelled by a decree dated April, 1810. The undertaking carried on by them was supplanted by a bureau, at the head of which was placed M. Maret. But it became necessary to take over the management of the depots, and, as a matter of course, he declined to take them over until they had been inspected as to quantities and condition. This verifying gave rise to many difficulties, and M. Maret did not take final charge of the stores until the beginning of November.

During these six months, the demands of the hospitals, prisons, and charitable establishments had been duly met, but no stores had taken the place of those going out. The prices were then not very favorable to the purchaser, and M. Maret was therefore in no haste to give orders for any purchases. He was not, like the Compagnie Paulet, subject to the supervision of the Prefect of Police, so he was free to act as he pleased. When troublous times came, there remained in the reserve depots 115,000 *quintaux métriques* of wheat, instead of 300,000, and 11,000 sacks of flour instead of 30,000. With such weak resources, the distribution of this reserve had to be carried on very cautiously. M. Maret did not care to take any risks before once more bringing his stock to the proper figure, and so he began to make purchases, and in spite of the assurances of his agents to the contrary, he made some of them in the radius set aside for provisioning the city.

Since the 15th of September, the bakers had been clamoring for an increase in the selling price of bread; it had already reached 14 *sols*, and no attention was paid to their demands, as the Emperor was greatly opposed to this price being exceeded. The bakers were informed that the large profits they had made for so long past rendered them able to endure a temporary loss.



As a result of this refusal to raise the price of bread, bread became scarce in the markets, in the suburbs, and in the thickly peopled quarters, by the end of September. The alarm went on increasing, and the price of cereals rose as a consequence. Towards the end of October, it was resolved upon to grant the bakers a premium of 5 francs on each sack of flour, the purchase of which they could show cause for. This measure was in vain; bread became more and more scarce; the doors of the bakers were besieged by crowds at early morn, and by nine o'clock their shops had been emptied. All articles of food which can take the place of bread increased in price in the same ratio as flour, which was then being sold at 76 francs per sack, which would bring the price of a four-pound loaf to about 16 sous.

At the beginning of November, it was decided, in the hope of bringing about a falling of prices, to have a few sales made in the public market from the reserve stock. The amount of this stock was at the time of only 98,000 *quintaux métriques* of wheat, and of only 24,000 bags of flour. M. Maret had given orders for considerable purchases at Hamburg and on the banks of the Rhine, where the harvest had been a fair one; but these purchases merely represented a distant relief, owing to the difficulties and length of time attendant upon the deliveries, the blockade of all ports being strictly enforced by England, thus rendering transportation by sea almost impossible.

We suffered greatly on this occasion from the lack of intelligence with which the administration dealt with these matters. This was due to the state of hostility, or at least of distrust, in which the Emperor persisted in remaining towards the trade. He remained stubborn in his decision not to entrust anything to it, so firmly he was convinced that one could not avoid being duped by it, and so he willed

that all transactions should take place through officialdom and by the agents of his government. Thus it was that M. Maret, in the matter of his purchases at Hamburg, Lübeck, and later even at Dantzic, sent his own men to seek, buy, and forward the provisions. The loss of time was, in the first place, considerable; again, the ability of the men thus employed was oftentimes rather mediocre, and finally, the results of their most zealous endeavors could never equal the intelligent activity of the merchants, whose correspondences and commercial relations are established beforehand, and who are always stimulated in carrying out the business transactions which they undertake by the vision of future profits. The mania of doing everything oneself was carried to the extent, in order to ensure the transportation carried out under the supervision of the administration from the Baltic to Paris, to locate at intervals, on this long line of canals and roads, a certain number of *auditeurs*, whose duty it was to prevent delays. Now, there was certainly nothing for which their education had less fitted them.

The general administration of the food supplies of the Empire changed hands by the appointment of a Minister of Commerce, and it was taken from M. de Montalivet to be given to M. de Sussy. We had no reason to cavil at the change. M. de Sussy, for a long time Director of Customs, had a better conception than M. de Montalivet of the nature of the transactions which were required. Moreover, he was more independent of spirit, and knew better how to oppose the wrong ideas of the Emperor in this connection.

By the first of February, the trade price of flour had reached 92 francs per sack, and the supply of the capital could not be met under the price of bread, such as it stood at the time, except by means of deliveries from the reserve stock which furnished daily, at 79 or 80 francs,

up to 1300 sacks which it bought from all quarters at the price current. Thereupon the Emperor called to him the committee of food supply, which henceforth was often to meet in his presence. Our discussions soon acquired an importance all the greater from the fact that we had to combat the idea of the Emperor, who wished to place a general price on grain, in a word, a *maximum*. His habit of seeing everything bend before his will, persuaded him that such a measure would certainly encounter some degree of opposition, but that it would end in being carried out like any other, and he saw in it an end to all perplexities. With the exception of M. de Montalivet and M. Maret, who were always backward in giving expression to their opinions, all the other members of the council loudly proclaimed their opposition to such a measure. Especially did M. Regnaud spare nothing to make patent the extent of the dangers which would surely be incurred, if one entered on so wrong a path, and I seconded him with all my might and main.

I endeavored to show that there were only two remedies for the evil: the one, to bring into the city as much wheat as could be obtained from outside sources, and, to that end to avail oneself of the services of all who were willing to co-operate; then maintain and encourage its free circulation at home, and especially to render the public markets safe enough for no one to fear bringing his produce for sale to them. Although these views did not always harmonize with the absolute ideas of the Emperor, I must do him the justice of saying that he never rejected them with any show of displeasure, but that he even gave me credit for the firmness of my opinions. As at the same time, fortunately for me, no great state of disorder broke out in the capital; owing to the vigilance and efficiency of the police, this period was the one wherein I incontestably

most enjoyed his consideration, and wherein he seemed to lay the greatest stress on my services.

The price of a sack of flour soon reached 111 francs, and, by the 1st of April it reached 125 francs; on the 15th it was as high as 150 francs, and wheat sold proportionately all the dearer. Alarm then turned to terror. Purchasers outbid the sellers themselves, however high their pretensions might be, and everything sold in the market felt the effects of this frenzy. Vegetables and small grains became priceless, and the crowd besieged the grocers' shops to get rice and vermicelli. The same effervescence prevailed in all suburban markets; in some even, the people forcibly took grain and proceeded to divide it. On the other hand, an enormous quantity of bread was being taken from Paris into the surrounding country, and, if this continued, it would be necessary to feed from the government's store, not only Paris, but those dwelling within a radius of ten leagues of the capital. In view of this state of affairs, the Emperor decided upon holding an extraordinary council of supply. He summoned to take part in it, in addition to the usual members, Comte Defermon, President of the Finance Committee, M. Pelet, Councillor of State, and M. Dubois, the former Prefect of Police.<sup>1</sup> I have found among my papers the minutes of the official report of the sitting held at the Emperor's on this occasion, and I think I ought to give it in full, as it may give an accurate insight of the manner in which matters were worked on, looked at, and solved in those days:—

His Majesty ordains the following measures:—

During the course of the night, the Prefect of Police shall send for the forty or fifty persons, who, in Paris and vicinity, are in the flour and grain trade. He shall demand of them to state the amount of

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor evidently thought he would find in M. Defermon and in M. Dubois the endorsement of his *maximum* system.

their purchases, and the stocks of wheat and flour they have in stock. He shall verify their statements by an inspection of their ledgers, which he shall initial. He shall then enquire of them what was to be the destination of this wheat and flour, and shall bind them to take them to the Paris market.

To-morrow morning, the Prefect of Police shall give an account to the Emperor, at the sitting of the council on supplies, of the quantity of wheat or flour revealed by such statement, and which can be secured by this means, as well as the intended destination of these commodities. His Majesty will thereupon decide as to where they are to be forwarded.

The arrival of a large quantity of wheat or flour on the public market cannot fail to produce a favorable effect on the popular anxiety and on the prices.

The prefect shall make known to these speculators and to others whom it may concern, that it is not proper to deprive the city of its provisioning and to engage in usurious speculations, for those who make purchases at a price exceeding 100 francs for sack, can be looked at in no other light than genuine regular monopolists. A show of display of severity will make people understand that this speculating on a rise in prices must cease, and that such speculation is a dangerous policy. The prefect shall warn coach proprietors and proprietors of public vehicles not to carry any bread out of Paris.

To-morrow morning one hundred sacks of flour shall be distributed in the *arrondissement* of Paris, on a basis of 18 *sols* as the price of the four-pound loaf. These one hundred sacks, which are to be delivered to-morrow, shall be for Friday, the following day's consumption, and this system is to be followed until further order.

This concession shall furnish the grounds on which to justify the prohibition of the exportation of bread.

To-morrow, at half-past four of the afternoon, the mayors of the suburban villages shall be notified that in consequence of the reserve stock having provided for the wants of the rural *communes*, no bread shall be allowed to leave Paris, beginning the day after to-morrow.

The officials on duty at the city gates shall be instructed to carry out this order with all possible discretion, and care shall be exercised not to allow anything to appear in the journals or to be printed, having any reference to this measure.



His Majesty will hold a council on supplies at two o'clock to-morrow, and will decide upon future measures in conformity with the statements laid before him.

The foregoing are the measures which are to be taken, beginning to-morrow.

His Majesty considers that the environs of Paris having this year enjoyed a good harvest, the scarcity with which they seem to be threatened must be in part the result merely of the fears of the consumers, and that it cannot become an actual fact except through the exportation of articles of food, as the administration has taken measures to provide for the food supply of the city of Paris.

There doubtless exists in the departments adjoining the capital a quantity of commodities which it is only fair that they should retain in order to provide for the wants of their population.

This circumstance must not give rise to any ostensible measure enforced to interfere with their distribution circulation, which it is not intended to prohibit, but it must furnish the basis of a discretionary measure which the officials are to take.

Its object shall be : —

1. — To keep in each *arrondissement* the necessary quantity of commodities;
2. — To have these commodities sent to market;
3. — To ensure that this wheat and flour shall be sold there at a fair price, and one not beyond the means of the consumer.

In order to attain this object, the best way seems to be to call together the principal farmers and holders of stocks of grain and flour of each *arrondissement*, and ask them to retain for local consumption the requisite quantity, and to gradually place them on the market at a reasonable figure.

On the other hand, people who speculate in grain and flour are to be notified that this kind of speculation will not be tolerated during such hard times; that the government, which protects them against public obloquy, will not allow them to abuse such protection, and that it consequently behooves them to cease engaging in this kind of speculation.

It is not a question of impeding the free circulation, but to induce the holders of cereals to bind themselves to keep in the locality the quantity determined upon as being necessary for the wants of the *arrondissement*. The result will be that each department will have the assurance that a quantity of cereals sufficient to meet home con-

sumption will come into the market gradually, and as required. The overplus will continue being put in circulation.

The prices will have to be established on such a basis as not to injure the consumer, while on the other hand, not to produce too wide a margin between the price of wheat sold on the local market, and that put into circulation.

The stock of cereals at present in the hands of speculators is to remain in their possession; but, from this on, it is left to them on condition that it find its way to the market.

The Minister of Industry and Commerce shall summon to Paris the prefects of Versailles, Chartres, Melun, Beauvais, and Laon, to meet him to-morrow at two o'clock. If by that time the prefect of Laon has not made his appearance, he shall summon the sub-prefect of Soissons, who is reported to be in Paris. He shall read to them the circular the draft of which is to be submitted to-morrow to His Majesty in council. This circular shall enjoin upon them to summon the principal farmers and holders of cereals of their department, during the course of next Saturday, and shall make this assemblage serve the purpose of a jury which is to determine what is the quantity of cereals or of flour which each one of the principal farmers or possessors can put on the markets. They shall be made to sign an agreement to furnish the quantity of wheat necessary to supply the wants of the department, by conveying it to the markets. This done, and a statement having been obtained of what each one shall have bound himself to supply, the prefect shall inform them that they would give the Emperor pleasure, if they would agree in no case to sell flour above 100 francs per bag.

It will be an easy matter to get them to understand that independently of their thus performing an act of patriotism, this request is nothing more than fair, as the price of wheat must at all events have a limit, and that it is impossible for the people to pay more than 100 francs.

This agreement to deliver at 100 francs will merely bear on the wheat which is to go to the markets of the department, so it will be so to speak, of a voluntary nature. The influence of this measure would have a most beneficial effect on the public mind if only one fourth of the farmers in each department would set the example of faithfully and gracefully giving their co-operation to it.

The knowledge that imparted to them that Paris is provisioned, and that the reserve does not need their assistance, will no doubt be

the means of more promptly deciding them to the acceptance of this reduction of the price.

If any one of the prefects believes that the executing of this measure is likely to be carried out more quickly in his own department, and will meet with less obstacles, the initiative might be left to him with the object of stimulating the other departments to a like action.

*A correct copy,*

The Minister, Secretary of State.

*Signed: le comte DARU.*

It was seven o'clock in the evening, when the sitting of the committee on food supplies ended at Saint-Cloud, and the tenor of the orders given to the Prefect of Police and to the Minister of Commerce are those which have just been read. Both of them were to render an account of their execution next day at two o'clock. At other times, and under a less powerful master, these two officials might have asked for twice twenty-four hours wherein to report; but, in those days, one set to work at once to do everything, to attempt everything, in order to obey the commands received. The present commands were executed within the specified time, and next day, at two o'clock, we were at Saint-Cloud, bringing with us the results of our labors.

The generally widespread knowledge that the Emperor was desirous of becoming acquainted with the extent of the evil and was seeking to remedy it, brought some peace of mind with it. Dating from that time, the gates of Paris were closed to all exportation of bread, and the hundred bags of flour distributed among the surrounding *communes* compensated for the severity of this measure.

The distress was increasing; in some departments it was fearful. In Normandy, where bands of hungry mendicants were marching through the country, the people were beginning to be stirred up in a dangerous fashion; in the

vicinity of Caen, there was a riot followed by pillage, and several flour mills were burnt down. On such occasions the blind madness of the masses rushes in and destroys that which they should most zealously defend. This riot was not quelled until after the arrival of a regiment of the Imperial Guard sent post haste by coach. Its repression was attended with great severity, for, in the executions which followed as a consequence of it, women were not spared. This is doubtless a sad extremity to resort to, but who will deny that it is also the only means of averting greater misfortunes.

Towards the end of April, one or two councils on food supply were held, at which the Emperor dwelt more strongly than usual on the necessity of taking some stringent measure to secure the food supply of the people in the teeth of the greediness of the holders of cereals and the monopolists, so it was proposed by him that the price of wheat should be determined by law. In vain did we once more point out to him the dangers and the uselessness of such a measure. On the 12th of May there appeared in the *Moniteur* a decree dated the 8th, issued without the council on food supply having had any participation in its drawing up, or even any knowledge of it, and which fixed in a definitive form the price of wheat in the six departments which alone, at that time, supplied the trade. They were the departments of the Seine, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, Aisne, Oise, and Eure-et-Loir. The price of the hectolitre of wheat was fixed, for those departments, at 33 francs. It was allowable to add to this price, in the departments which drew their supplies outside of this territory, the amount of the cost of transportation which was determined by the prefect, pursuant to the instructions of the Minister of Commerce, and taking into account the distance to be travelled, and the legitimate profits of trade.

Napoleon was just on the point of leaving, to take command of his army. It was therefore a kind of farewell which he saw fit to say to the most needy portion of his subjects. He hoped he would thus ensure their tranquillity during his absence.



## CHAPTER XXII

The draft of 1812 and the new organization of the National Guard — Napoleon's grievances against Russia — Treaties of alliance between France, Prussia, and Austria — Sweden's political situation under the pressure exercised over it by Napoleon — Negotiations and final understanding of Bernadotte with Russia and England — Fêtes and magnificent balls during the winter of 1811-1812 — Secret societies formed by the students of Northern Germany — A plot to assassinate Napoleon — A Leipsic student reaches Paris with this object in view; his arrest and imprisonment — Treason committed by an official of the War Office bribed by Russia — Vidocq, the detective, discovers a counterfeiter — The manufacture on an extended scale of counterfeit notes of the Bank of Russia and of the Bank of Vienna, countenanced by the Emperor's police — Conversation between M. Pasquier and Napoleon, on the eve of the latter's departure for the Russian campaign.

At the beginning of the year 1812, the Emperor called for a draft of two hundred thousand conscripts. This draft was a little later on followed by the organization of the National Guard into three *bans* (levies), in which were comprised all able-bodied men from the ages of twenty to sixty. The first *ban* was composed of young men from the ages of twenty to twenty-six. It was divided into *cohortes* of one thousand men. This organization was nothing else than a new means devised to raise another hundred thousand men, by getting back all those the conscription had spared during the past six years. The *cohortes* of the first *ban* were immediately placed at the disposal of the Minister of War. It is true that they were merely employed in guarding the frontiers, preserving peace at home, and garrisoning fortified towns and arsenals. But the

frontiers extended to the shores of the Baltic, and, even if the condition of not having to do duty beyond them were strictly observed, it afforded this advantage, viz., that the regular army could be disposed of in its entirety for foreign service. I make more particular mention of these two levies made at one and the same time, not only on account of their enormous size, but because to the eyes of an observer situated as favorably as I was to see and hear everything, it was for the first time noticeable that if they did not excite a feeling of discontent akin to rebellion, they at least were the cause of general and deep dissatisfaction. No one could any longer feel safe, if men who considered themselves totally exempt from military service were to be called out.

Napoleon could not fail to know of the bad effect produced by this measure. I have not to reproach myself with having concealed from him all that was being said in the *bourgeoisie* as well as in the lower classes, but nothing could restrain him. The diplomatic intercourse between his Minister and the Russian ambassador was daily becoming more unpleasant. Napoleon entertained three grievances against Russia: 1. — A ukase issued towards the end of 1810 by which the ports of the Russian Empire were opened to all English vessels loaded with colonial wares, provided they sailed under a foreign flag. This practically amounted to breaking the Treaty of Tilsit and the subsequent agreements; 2. — A protest on the part of the Emperor Alexander against the union of the Duchy of Oldenburg to France, as if Russia had the slightest right to interfere with the affairs of a prince of the Rhine Confederation; 3. — The warlike preparations which the Emperor Alexander had begun early in 1811, in sending to the borders of the Duchy of Warsaw five divisions of the army of Moldavia.

Then it was that, casting aside the reserve of the forego-

ing month of August, the Emperor resolved at last to listen to the overtures made by Prussia. After much parleying between the Duc de Bassano and the Minister of that power, a treaty of alliance was signed between it and France in Paris in the month of February. The open clauses of this treaty did not contain anything that might seem directed against Russia, but the secret clauses were positive in this direction, and they were strengthened by several special agreements. The most important of them all was the one, which, in the case of a war breaking out between France and Russia, contained the engagement to furnish a contingent of twenty thousand men and sixty guns, independently of the garrisons which were to occupy a number of fortified towns which were mentioned.

Shortly afterwards, a definitive alliance was signed in Paris between France and Austria. Following upon the customary stipulations, the object of which was to effect a mutual guarantee of their respective territories, the two powers bound themselves mutually, in case of an attack, to supply a help of thirty thousand men and sixty guns. They also guaranteed, and this is noteworthy, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and recognized the rights of navigation of neutrals such as laid down and confirmed by the Treaty of Utrecht. Several secret articles were appended to this treaty. One of them excepted as *casus fœderis* France's war with England, and the one in the Peninsula beyond the Pyrenees, but it included in explicit terms one that might break out between France and Russia. What could then be the Emperor's plans? Whither was his ambition to lead him? Fortune, in becoming unfaithful to him, has not allowed one to know in a precise manner.

If, as cannot be doubted, he meditated a fresh war with Russia, the most elementary notions of politics seemed to demand that France should neglect nothing to maintain and

render more efficient an alliance with the Swedish monarchy. Unfortunately, the Emperor had entered on a totally different path. Unable to reconcile himself to the idea of recognizing the full independence of the sovereign who had emerged from the ranks of his army, and who had required his permission to mount the steps of his throne, he would have liked to consider this sovereign as merely one of his lieutenants, who would consent to sacrifice the most evident interests of his new subjects to the combinations of his policy.

Hardly taking into consideration Sweden's poverty, which the rash enterprises of the preceding reign had considerably aggravated, Napoleon had not only ordered that country to break off all alliance with England, but he had exacted that it should at all risks, whatever it might have to endure, declare itself the enemy of that power. Sweden had obeyed, and, yielding to the impulse which had already led it to place the inheritance of its crown on the head of a French general,<sup>1</sup> it had, towards the end of 1810, declared war against England. The sacrifice was a great one, and the Stockholm cabinet doubtless expected the poor compensation of a subsidy. This was a habit it had acquired from the days of Cardinal de Richelieu to 1789, but Napoleon thought such methods of influence beneath his dignity. He had, at that time, become extremely thrifty; the Spanish war had already made considerable inroad on his private list, and he was desirous of husbanding all his resources in view of the great undertakings he was planning.

Not content with refusing Sweden what that country thought itself entitled to, he did not hesitate to multiply

<sup>1</sup> I must here say, once for all, that Bernadotte, Prince Royal of Sweden, did not finally mount the throne until 1818, at the time of the death of Charles XIII., but he nevertheless governed the country immediately on his arrival, and nothing was done except by his orders and in conformity with his views.

his demands, and sought first to obtain a certain number of Swedish sailors to man his fleet, but this was denied him. He then attempted to introduce into Sweden his Customs' tariff, and demanded that French Customs' officials should be established at Gothenburg. He next conceived the idea of forming a Confederation of the North, akin to that of the Rhine, and which was to include Sweden, Denmark, and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. All these propositions having been rejected, he experienced thereat considerable displeasure which was increased by the consideration which England showed towards Swedish commerce. It thereupon became evident that England regarded Sweden as a friend, for the time being compelled to yield to the inexorable, but which could not but return to it. Furious at what he at once styled a culpable connivance, Napoleon authorized his privateers to capture Swedish vessels, under the pretence that they had no license register, or that it was an English one. The smallest Swedish coasters were seized, even those loading in German ports, and the Swedish sailors were treated as prizes and prisoners of war; several sailors were conveyed to Antwerp and to Toulon, and compelled to serve on French ships.

Sweden was desirous of uniting Norway to its possessions. This proposition was not listened to. The occupation of Swedish Pomerania and of the Island of Rügen took place very shortly afterwards, in the course of January, 1812.

The terms imposed on Sweden being such as could not be accepted, this power had turned towards Russia, and had entered into negotiations with Great Britain. As early as the end of March, a treaty was concluded, whereby Russia bound itself to bring Norway under the sway of Sweden, either by way of negotiations or by force of arms. Sweden, on its part, bound itself in case of a war between France



and Russia, to make a diversion on whatever point in Germany should be judged convenient. Twenty-five or thirty thousand Swedes were to be united with that object to fifteen or twenty thousand Russians. The *chargé d'affaires* in Paris at the same time handed to the Duc de Bassano a note wherein he protested against the occupation of Pomerania, and informed him that his sovereign would henceforward remain neutral between France and England. During the course of the following summer, Sweden came to a complete understanding with England, and the friendly intercourse and trade relations were placed on the same footing as they were on the first of January, 1791, and the London cabinet bound itself to supply all the necessary support to maintain the independence and security of its ally in the event of its being attacked by any power whatsoever. Immediately after this agreement having been entered into, all Swedish ports were opened to ships of all nations, for the import and export of foreign and Swedish products.

Never did Napoleon more abuse his power than in the case of Sweden. Was he seeking revenge for an elevation which was not of his doing, and which perhaps bore the resemblance of a parody on his own?

On the part of Bernadotte there was the need of justifying, in the eyes of the Swedish nation, the favor done him at its hands. He considered himself but little indebted to his former chief, and resisting the latter's will, placed him on a footing of equality which must have particularly flattered his ridiculously vain character. He must indeed have been a happy man if his heart never reproached him with the injury he did to his fatherland!

There was no longer any room for illusions. Europe was about to become the theatre of a more serious struggle than any it had previously witnessed. On the one side, France

dragged after it Prussia and Austria; on the other, Russia had the support of England and Sweden. Who could predict the issue of the conflict? It is interesting to follow the Emperor's doings during the few days of calm still remaining to him. He relied on no one for the direction of the negotiations in which he was engaged from Savona to St. Petersburg, and in this connection his ministers did not write a line that he did not dictate. Worried with the troubles caused by a scarcity of food, which could not have made its appearance at a worse time, giving to the details of the higher administration of his Empire the attention he never denied them, he in nowise neglected the arranging of the magnificent fêtes which he apparently considered as the necessary adjuncts of sovereignty. Hence, Court theatricals, social gatherings, fêtes, and balls were never more numerous than during the winter of 1811-1812.

Among all these fêtes, I must particularly notice the masked balls, the giving of which had become a custom with Napoleon during the past two or three years, and from which he seemed to derive much pleasure. He enjoyed them all the more in that there was a certain foolhardiness in braving the inconveniences and dangers attendant upon them. The carnival was nearing its end, the Archchancellor and the Prince de Neufchâtel had given their masked balls, and the last one of the season took place at M. de Marescalchi's, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had caused a large ballroom to be built of wood and canvass in the garden attached to the somewhat small house which he occupied in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. Fears had been entertained of the danger of a fire, and I had had to take extraordinary precautions to guard against it, but another danger threatened, which was unlooked for, and which only became known after it had been passed.

The students in North Germany chafed with a feeling of

restlessness which daily grew under the yoke to which they were subjected, and indignant at the frequent vexations which they had to endure, were seeking to free the German fatherland by means of secret societies. Towards the end of 1809, a member of these societies had been on the point of assassinating Napoleon while he was attending a parade and surrounded by his Guard, at Schönbrunn. The daring shown in this youth's admissions, the courage with which he had faced his doom, the declaration he made that if his life was spared he would renew his attempt, attracted great attention. One affected to consider this attempt as an isolated fact, and as the result of a diseased brain. But far from this being the case, this frenzy was contagious.

Two youths, belonging to the best families in Saxony, left Leipsic at the beginning of 1812, fully determined upon bringing to an issue the attempt which had been unattended with success at Schönbrunn. One of them renounced his part in the undertaking, just as he was about to set foot on French soil, and returned to Saxony. The other, whose name was La Sala, continued on his way, and at Strasburg met with a commissary, who, quite innocently, gave him a seat in his carriage, and brought him to Paris. Fortunately, he had spent some time in Strasburg. His comrade, on his return to Dresden, had become a prey to remorse, and thought it his duty to inform M. de Sneff, the Saxon Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the plot which was still to be carried into execution without him. M. de Sneff had immediately dispatched a courier to Paris. At midnight, he was with the Duc de Bassano, who laid the dispatch before me, thus putting me in possession of the name and physical characteristics of the youth, and enabling me to give the necessary instructions for discovering him. The detective who received his orders directly from me was a very intelligent man, whose worth became known

on this occasion; his name was Foudras. Later on, I appointed him an inspector-general. The very next morning, he found M. de La Sala in a furnished lodging, and arrested him before noon. The young man was well provided with pistols and poniards. Moreover, he did not seek to excuse himself; feeling that he had been betrayed, he made a full confession. He expressed but one regret, and that was that he had not arrived two days sooner, thus missing the opportunity offered him by M. de Marescalchi's masked ball. His fate had to be decided upon. I laid down in my report that the best action to take was not to give any prominence to the incident, but to bury it in the deepest secrecy, as there was nothing more fatal than to accustom the public mind to the thought that such outrages could be easily planned and carried out. Nothing was to be gained by bringing this young man to trial and having him shot; it was better to treat him as a visionary. My opinion was found good. La Sala was taken to Vincennes, whence he emerged, together with other prisoners of state, at the time of the Restoration.

Very soon afterwards, another very serious discovery was made, and this one had a more tragic issue. For some time past, the Russian Embassy had been the object of a most active surveillance. The Duc de Bassano had asked me to lend him a trustworthy man, who was to report direct. The man whom I sent him was the same detective whose activity had given me so much satisfaction in La Sala's affair. Matters had been arranged, when, for some reason or the other, a Russian courier was arrested on the frontier. Upon searching his papers, he was found to be the bearer of packages which were being sent to St. Petersburg by M. de Czernicheff, *aide-de-camp* to the Emperor of Russia, and who had been sent to Paris on a special mission. These packages contained the most detailed statis-

tics as to the position and strength of all bodies of French troops in Germany. Now, these statistics, originally drawn up for the Emperor's personal use, could only have fallen into the hands of the Russian envoy through a most culpable breach of trust, the author of which had not been discovered, when on the day of M. de Czernicheff's departure, the detective who was watching his hotel, conceived the idea of inspecting the room he had just left, and thoroughly searching it. The Russian envoy had spent the night in burning papers, the ashes of which filled the fireplace. When stirring up these ashes, the detective pulled away a little hearth-rug under which was found a note, which he had doubtless intended to cast into the flames with the others, but which had found its way under the hearth-rug. This note plainly came from the man who had supplied the statistics.

The note was brought to the Minister of Police, then to the Minister of War, who at once summoned all the heads of departments, but none of them could recognize the handwriting. It was then decided to take the document to the Prince de Neufchâtel, to whom, as Major-General of the Army, the statistics were sent, and where they might consequently have been copied. The prince having submitted the matter to his chief secretary, the handwriting was recognized as that of a clerk who had in days gone by worked with him in the War Office, and who was still employed in its bureau of statistics. An hour afterwards, the clerk was brought into the presence of the Minister of Police, and confessed that he had carried on this guilty practice for some eight or ten years. Every Russian ambassador in Paris had in turn confided to his successor the secret of this profitable corruption. The unfortunate clerk soon paid with his life for a crime for which there was no forgiveness. No government shows any mercy to such treacher-



ous deeds, yet every government does not fail to encourage them, whenever it find it in its interest to do so. Napoleon made pretence of being very wroth at a piece of treachery which had been pursued, he said, at the very time of his greatest intimacy with the Emperor Alexander.

During the same period, a singular discovery was made at the Banque de France, where several counterfeit notes had been presented to be exchanged for specie. As in matters of this kind, it is always a wise plan to avoid trouble, the money had been promptly paid over, and the notes had been brought to the *préfecture de police*. On a close examination of them, I found that they were not all identically the same, and that they were not struck off from copperplates. Indian ink had been used, and they had been made by hand; hence the danger of their multiplying was far less, as their manufacture by such a process must of necessity be somewhat limited, but at the same time harder to discover. A strict watch was set on the banks of gambling-houses, and, a fortnight later, a man was seen to lay a counterfeit note on the cloth. The man was a miniature painter. It was not sufficient to know that he had uttered a counterfeit note, there remained to learn whether he had done so wittingly, and whether the note was his handiwork. The chief detective took good care not to have the artist's domicile searched, for he wished to allow him sufficient time to manufacture another note. Several days were therefore allowed to elapse, then, just as he was entering his domicile, the police entered with him and made a lengthy search. At first, it was all in vain. Just as the detectives were about to retire, one of them<sup>1</sup> caught a look that the artist had cast towards a stove

<sup>1</sup> This detective was one Vidocq, whom the chief of detectives, M. Henri, had, with my permission, taken out of the prison of Bicêtre, where he was held consequent upon two or three escapes from the penal establishments

which stood in the middle of the room. On raising its lid, there was found a note begun, together with the one used as a model. The unfortunate man was generally in the habit of making one every three weeks, using tracing paper to do his work. As he did not have any accomplice, he might have eluded discovery for a considerable length of time, if he had contented himself with changing his notes at shop-counters, and he might perhaps never have been found out, if he had not changed them at a gambler's bank. Strange to relate, there hung above the table at which he worked a small framed engraving in a frame representing the sentence and execution of a counterfeiter of *assignats*. It was feared that were he brought to trial, the publicity thus given to the case would be the cause of spreading the knowledge of so easy a method of counterfeiting. The Banque de France itself drew attention to the fact. He was consequently treated as a prisoner of state, and taken to Vincennes.

This case of counterfeit notes leads me to speak of another similar enterprise, but one on a much larger scale and in which the Imperial Government was implicated. It followed the one I have mentioned, and came to my knowl-

of Brest and Toulon, whither he had been sent for forgery. He had already, while at Bicêtre, rendered rather important services to the police, which had been indebted to him for several useful warnings based on the intercourse which thieves who are under lock and key always manage to keep up with those of the outer world. Hence M. Henri had believed that if his freedom were granted him, he might assist in making some important discoveries in Paris, nor had he been mistaken. Few detectives have proved so useful; in the end, under the régime of M. Delaveau, he has been allowed to assume a recognized and open position, and to become at the *préfecture de police* the chief of a branch of the outdoor service, and in truth, this was hardly the right thing. It is even said that he works directly under that official. In my day, he would have never been allowed to cross the step of my antechamber, and he came into contact only with the chief of the department who made use of his services. Such confidence shown publicly and with so much abandon to a convict has had a bad effect, and has on several occasions contributed to discredit the police.

edge in the most extraordinary manner, towards the beginning of the expedition to Russia. The *commissaire de police* and the assistant, who together exercised a more direct supervision over the printing establishments, informed me one day that they had acquired positive proof that a number of workmen were engaged, with the greatest secrecy, for some night-work for which they were being very highly remunerated. He had caused several of them to be shadowed who went at dusk to an isolated house situated beyond the city gates, in the plain of Montrouge. All the windows on the ground floor of this house, which the police had minutely examined, were protected with exceedingly strong iron railings, and the doors were so built that it would be a difficult matter to break them open.

I at once ordered that the house be surrounded in the dead of the night, and I delivered a search-warrant in order that the police could demand that the doors be opened to them at early dawn, in conformity with the terms of the law. The police agents, foreseeing resistance, asked to be reinforced by gendarmes taken from a new corps which was at my disposal. As anticipated, a show of resistance was made, it became necessary to batter in the doors, and there were a few men wounded on either side. As a result, there was discovered the manufacture, organized on a large scale, of counterfeit bank-notes.

This time, indeed, it was not the Banque de France, but the Imperial Bank of Russia and even the Bank of Vienna, which was affected, which goes to show in a positive manner that all this was taking place at the outset of the campaign of 1813. The counterfeit notes, plates, and graving tools were all seized and brought to the *préfecture de police*; but hardly was this expedition over, when the Duc de Rovigo hurriedly called on me in a state of actual consternation. The whole of this pretty undertaking was being

carried on by the orders and under the direction of M. Desmarest by a printer named Fain, whose brother was at that time one of the Emperor's private secretaries. It then became necessary to inform me that such a plan had been hit upon in order to pay for the purchases of supplies made by the French army in Russia.

Preparations were making for resorting to the same methods when the war against Austria was entered upon. I could not help saying to the Duc de Rovigo that I had to thank him greatly for having up to this time spared me the knowledge of this, but that prudence should have at least dictated to him to warn me that such and such a house belonged to him, and that I might in consequence dispense with finding out what was being done in it. He agreed with me on the latter point, but with regard to the nature of the thing itself, he told me that the Emperor was merely following the example set him by England. The alleged orders he had received were of a kind not to be disregarded, consequently everything that had been brought to the *préfecture* was taken away to the Ministry of Police, and he disposed of the things as he saw fit. I have since learnt in a positive fashion that these counterfeit notes were never of any practical utility. A very small number of them were put into circulation during the Russian campaign, and, at the time of the retreat, a large quantity which was then worthless were hurriedly cast to the flames.

But, do what one may, these ugly transactions always get to the knowledge of the public, and, after the Restoration, the one just spoken of became public property through the claims preferred by a Hamburg firm against the Duc de Rovigo. This firm had formerly and by his orders received a large payment made with these counterfeit notes. It claimed to hold him personally responsible for this, and, if he managed to escape the disagreeable consequences of

this claim, the whole of the business and the part he had in it were exposed to the view of the public. As to the counterfeit notes of the Bank of Vienna, the rapid and unfortunate result of the Saxon campaign did not allow of a single one being put into circulation. The only result, therefore, of the affair was a number of troublesome complications.

During the two months preceding the Emperor's departure, I spent most of my evenings at the house of M. de Bassano. I witnessed all his illusions. His faith was based on the Austrian alliance. He had come to look upon Napoleon's marriage to the Archduchess as flattering to the highest degree the pride of the Austrian Imperial family. Again, he attached to this conjugal bond all such ideas of intimacy as generally became established between simple middle class families, which, so to speak, become one by a marriage. The actions of the Austrian ambassador were of a nature to confirm such a view; no one ever made such a display of constant and more minute attentions than did the Prince von Schwarzenberg. He hardly absented himself from the official residence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or from the country-house which the Duke had rented near Saint-Cloud, while his gallantry towards the Duchess was indefatigable. He was not an intellectual man, far from it; but his great name, his brilliant mode of living, and his kindly and courteous ways made up for what he lacked. He succeeded in inspiring so great a confidence that Napoleon laid much stress on the command of the auxiliary Austrian corps being entrusted to him, thus under the impression that he would so obtain the best guarantee for a faithful execution of the treaty of alliance.

All this went on under my very eyes, and indeed I deserved some credit in guarding myself in the midst of not



prejudiced surroundings, against being carried away by the enthusiasm to which nearly all those about me gave way to. It is nevertheless a fact that my fears for the Emperor's future date from that period. I was singularly struck by all the uncertainties which that future presented.

I had, on the eve of his departure, a very short conversation with the Emperor, but it was not one of a nature to dissipate my apprehensions. It took place after the audience of the *lever*; he had detained me, and, after a few insignificant remarks with regard to the matters of my administration in general, and to the more particular attention I should bestow upon them during his absence, he broached the question of the food supply. True to his habit of looking upon as established facts those things which he desired to have one believe with him, he remarked: "As to the scarcity of food, that is a thing of the past; harvesting time will shortly be here, and, in a fortnight, you will see the end of all your troubles." I told him that such was not my view of the case; that the crop, as regards the district about Paris, was never gathered before the middle and often only at the end of July, and that, as a consequence, its product would not enter into consumption until towards mid August; hence there were still three months to be passed before this period was reached, and those three months might be the hardest to tide over, as the stock of provisions was ever diminishing. I added that it did not avail concealing the fact that his absence would render the situation more dangerous, because the action of the government would necessarily lose a little of its strength.

"As an instance of this," I urged, "on the occasion of the rioting in the vicinity of Caen, Your Majesty himself gave the necessary orders for sending to the spot with instructions to act a regiment of the Guard. These commands were executed with a rapidity and a vigor which might not

be found in so high a degree, when the Emperor will be four hundred leagues away from his capital. Should, unfortunately, a somewhat extended insurrectionary movement break out, is it not to be feared that it might produce fatal consequences both at home and abroad? It is my duty not to conceal from Your Majesty the dangers of which I see the probability."

Napoleon appeared struck by these few remarks. When I had ended speaking, he remained silent, and pacing to and fro between the window and the fireplace, his arms crossed behind his back, like a man who is pondering deeply. I followed in his steps, when, facing me suddenly, he uttered the words which follow: "Yes, there is doubtless some truth in what you tell me; it is one more difficulty added to the many I have to face in *the greatest, the most difficult* undertaking I have ever attempted; but I must fain bring to a termination what I have begun. Farewell, *mon-sieur le préfet*."

He knew, therefore, of the perils into which he was about to fling himself. It may be that this conversation and the few words I spoke to him as to the possibility of an insurrectionary movement during his absence, may have contributed, greatly against my intention, to the resolution he took of leaving behind him the decree governing prices. It is a most remarkable thing that he did not say a word about it to me.

He left Paris on the 9th of May, and reached Dresden very shortly afterwards. He remained in that city till the end of the month; the Empress followed him there almost immediately. The narrative of the campaign which followed his departure from Dresden, and which found its termination in the disasters of a retreat in the midst of which the finest and most valorous of armies was reduced to nothing, has been written by the men most able to give

an account of it and to pass a just opinion on it, by men who shared in its glories and its sufferings. I shall not, therefore, attempt to tell what they have related a hundred times better than I could do. I shall merely attempt to render the impressions felt by those about me and which I myself experienced.

END OF VOL. I

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